



Kula Maru
2007

***Kula
Manu
2007***

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY HAWAII

Cover art “pink bus” by Dave Jones

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Kula Manu 2007

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The 2007 Kula Manu presents a beautiful collection of writing, art, and photography from all aspects of the Brigham Young University-Hawaii community. An eclectic grouping of the submissions we received are respectfully published here, through which we hope to encourage the acknowledgement of local artists, whose efforts are appreciated. We commend all of the contributors for their impressive talent and their willingness to share it with the Kula Manu.

A special thanks to Myrna Marler and the Kula Manu Staff for all of your involvement and hard work. We are also grateful for the assistance of the English Department and BYUH Print Services. Alohas.

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Dust

Kaelee Hodges

Based on many true stories of the struggling orphans in Africa

Mwamba, Mwamba...

Mwamba, ey.

Mwamba, Mwamba, oyesase, a Mwamba, Mwamba, ey.

God is everywhere, God is everywhere. Yes, God is everywhere. No matter where you are, God is with you.

Low voices penetrate the mud walls and wake the little girl humming on a blanket inside. Scuffling feet surround the hut; she wraps her arm tighter around her two younger brothers who lie beside her. A gust of wind wafts smoke inside the tiny window to the left of the door; she is not tall enough to set the bricks inside to close it. Suddenly the voices escalate, carried far across the dry, flat landscape. Lifting Makupa from the floor and taking Lwendo's hand, she rushes them out the back door just as the flickering grimaces of the men barge through the front. Clay pots crash on the floor; laughter filters out from the inside.

"Where are you Carol? Nobody here to protect you now... Carol.... You can't hide forever girl!"

She tenses, crouching in the bush, watching the four men take her home. She wraps Lwendo in a blanket and ties him to her back, then takes another to strap Makupa to her front. She stands there, swaying a little at first under the weight of her two brothers, but gradually gathers her balance. Squinting against the tears running from her eyes, she glares at the hut that once was her home. A wail from the little bundle on her chest shakes her from anger and into reality. She searches her clothing for something to ease his cry and only finds a small lump of shema, but uses it to satisfy his hunger. He eats the corn meal she places in his mouth and falls back to sleep, but the voices in the hut hush to a whisper and a head pokes out of the back door. Carol plops down into the tall grass, but her uncle's eyes pierce through the

darkness and she feels his smirk land on her silhouette. Shooting up from behind the bush, she turns her back on the gathering predators and leaps into the corn stalks.

Her bare feet beat against the sharp rocks. Warm blood pours into the dusty earth. The small bundle strikes her back, jerking her forward with each step. Cornstalks thrash through her skin and whip into her eyes as she staggers through the field. She glances back. Four flames follow her through the corn. She hears pounding feet close behind. Jetting between pathways and cutting across fields, she ignores her stinging skin and throbbing feet and runs through the night. Her chest aches and her throat stings with each gasp as she emerges from the corn fields. Dry, dusty, flat earth surrounds her, offering no place to hide. Noticing a small patch of tall grass in the morning light, she sighs and hobbles to her left. She drops down and with her head in her bleeding hands she sobs herself to sleep, leaving Lwendo hanging from her back and Makupa cradled on her thighs.

* * * * *

Lifting her head, Carol winces at the afternoon sun. Her round lips crack in the middle and at the sides. Though still puffy from crying, her huge almond eyes shine with intensity and her dirty brown cheeks glow from within. Standing up, she tightens Lwendo on her back and Makupa to her chest. Hunched over a bit from her load, she isn't much taller than the dried, brown grass. Her skinny 12-year-old frame is practically hidden between the two bundles she carries, but she marches on. Bringing her head up, she wipes the sweat from her forehead and notices an abandoned chicken coop. The thatched roof hangs on four large sticks with bags tied to the middle two patches, where it had caved in. The walls are also thatched, surrounded almost completely by metal wire. A small gap in the wire and the sagging roof above it suggest where a door might have been, though obviously there has not been one for a long time. Carol, however, looks past these imperfections. She ducks underneath the drooping roof, kneels down on the piles of soft hay, and unties Lwendo and Makupa from her shoulders. As she lays Makupa down in the hay, he starts to cry.

"Shhh.... Baby, it's going to be ok. Sista's here."

"Carol?"

"Yeah, Lwendo?"

"I think he's hungry. Why don't you make shema?"

"I don't have a pot, or corn. Lwendo, we are not home right now."

Lwendo pushes the pile of hay together and lays his head down.

"I'm hungry too, Carol. When can you make shema? And why did Uncle take our house?"

"I don't know, Lwendo." By the tone of her voice Lwendo knows not to ask again, though his stomach told him otherwise. In the silence Carol regrets the sharpness she used with her brother.

"Lwendo?"

"Yes?"

"Remember when mom used to make us shema?"

Lwendo's face brightened and he sat up to reply.

"Yeah! And she would cook cabbage too."

Carol smiled at her little brother daydreaming about shema and cabbage, wanting to believe that she could give him what he needed.

"Once I get some cabbage and corn, I will make it for you, ok?"

"Ok."

Lwendo lays back down in the hay and drifts to sleep as Carol stares outside.

"Carol. I love you."

"Me too. Why can't you get better?"

"Sometimes God needs us to be sick, Carol, to teach us. And sometimes God needs us to die too. Do you understand what I am saying?"

"But you don't have to die, mommy, right?"

"Don't cry sweetheart, you're a big girl, remember? Ok. Now, Mommy needs you to remember something. I need you to remember to always take care of your little brothers; no one else is going to watch after them but you. You need to be mommy after I go, ok? You make them shema and take care of the garden. I know you can do it because you're mommy's big girl, huh? Remember to always be mommy's big girl."

Tears stream down Carol's face as she glances around to make sure her two brothers are still asleep.

"I am a big girl." Carol tells herself as she picks Makupa up off her lap and lays him down next to Lwendo. Though already seven years old, Lwendo is only the size of a five-year-old. Makupa, on the other hand, born just a year before their mother died two years ago, has wide shoulders and unnatural height for his age. She rubs her thumb over their cheeks.

"I am a big girl."

* * * * *

Outside, clouds block the sun from shining and warming Carol's frozen hands. Wind whips through the corn fields and through her

clothing. She ducks below the stalks and quickly pulls off a few more dried cobs before creeping away toward her chicken coop. Once inside, she drops the cabbage and five corn cobs in front of Makupa and Lwendo. The two children gasp and reach to touch the food as if it were a dream. Their fingers graze the round, green cabbage and squeeze the corn. Lwendo jumps up to embrace Carol, who lifts him up to sit on her side. Makupa begins to dance.

"You stop that, Makupa. You're getting the food all dusty!" Carol laughs, picking up the food. Using a rock to pound the corn into dust, Carol turns to ask Lwendo to start a fire, but he is already gathering sticks. A smile edges onto her face. She used to make fires before. After starting the fire, Lwendo runs back into the bushes. Sitting cross-legged, Lwendo picks long pieces of grass and weaves them into a circle. He puts it over his neck, examines its length, and then looks back up at Carol pounding shema. Smiling at his accomplishment, he stands up, holds the grass necklace behind his back, and struts over to Carol.

"Whatchu' got there, Lwendo?" Carol asks, pausing in her chore to play along.

"Nothing... Close your eyes!"

"Close my eyes? But what for?"

"Please?" Lwendo tilts his head and pouts his lip. Laughing, Carol squeezes her eyes shut.

"No peeking, Carol." He waves his hand in front of her face and, with no flinch from Carol, decides it's safe to proceed. He lifts the grass necklace over her head, places it on her shoulders, and steps back.

"Ok! Open!" Carol opens her eyes, touches the present around her neck, and stands up to hug Lwendo.

"Thank you, Lwendo. It is beautiful. Did you do this all yourself? You did a very good job." Lwendo grins and shrugs it off.

"You're welcome!" Lwendo yells as he runs to Makupa, nudging his shoulder as he skips past.

* * * * *

Coughing next to her breaks her dreams. She shakes the rats away from her bleeding feet and puts her blanket over Lwendo, who takes a deep, shaky breath before shivering back to sleep. Hearing footsteps behind the chicken coop, Carol searches for somewhere to hide the two little ones.

"Shhh... Lwendo, just go back to sleep. Do not make a sound. Do you understand? Not one word. It's important that you listen to me. Do you understand?" Carol whispers in the dark. With a nod from

Lwendo, she is satisfied, but just as she covers them up with dry grass a figure blocks the moonlight in the doorway. Her heart stops. She looks for a place to run, anywhere to hide. But he sees her. Her stomach lurches at the sight of her uncle crawling towards her, and in her desperation every muscle in her body tightens into the fetal position. She squeezes her eyes shut and pushes all thought from her mind. She feels his rough hands move under her chatenge. She bursts open and tries to squirm away. Dust clouds surround them; Carol coughs as she hears Lwendo stir in the corner where she hid them.

"Be quiet, Lwendo!" she pleads to herself, "I just need you to listen to me just this once. Please, just don't notice them. Don't hurt them." Carol scoots back, using her elbows to get away, but he grasps her ankle and drags her across the ground to him.

"Come here you little whore!"

She struggles against the weight of his body, but he pushes on her throat and the world goes black again.

* * * * *

Sunlight hits her eyelids and makes the back of her eyes ache. She stays there for a while, sprawled in the dirt before she gathers up her clothes strewn about her old hut. She touches the bruises on her face and head and tries to scratch off some of the dried blood. One tear streaks down her dusty cheek, but Carol quickly rubs it off with the back of her hand.

"I am a big girl."

Inside her old home, she crawls on her hands and knees, trying not to be noticed. She turns and spits at her uncle, who is lying face down on the couch, still clutching the bottle of homemade whiskey. She stays down past the back door until she hits the garden, where she starts to sprint back to her brothers at the abandoned chicken coop. The sun hangs low in the sky when she finally spots it in the distance, but she does not slow down. She stumbles inside the doorway just as the darkness creeps out from the horizon.

They jump up and run into her arms, relieved to see a familiar face, but Carol pushes them away.

"Are you boys ok?"

The two nod, staring at their sister's bruised face.

"Good. Now, let's go to sleep. I will make shema in the morning."

They obey, and she tucks them into their blankets on the hay. She watches their chests move steadily up and down, kisses them each on the forehead, and grabs the pitcher to gather water from the well. At

this hour all the men are gone drinking, making it safe for Carol to walk alone. She watches her feet drag in the dirt and lets the tears trickle off her nose and into her mouth. The taste of salt is familiar.

"Oh God, why have you created me?" she pleads, still looking at the ground. She sets the pitcher of water under the faucet and pumps. Around her, only crickets sing as the wind shakes the dry grass. Dark clouds block the moon and stars, leaving Carol in blackness. She pumps slowly and steadily, then starts pushing down hard and fast. Her sobs dictate the cold handle, two fast pumps, rest, one slow, and then she gives up and hangs her frail, aching body over the lever.

"Oh God, why have you created me?" she sobs into her chest. Thunder cracks about her. Lifting her arms up to the sky she screams, "OH GOD, WHY HAVE YOU CREATED ME?"

She swings her fists down into the soft earth and beats down the dust with the rain. The smells of wet dirt and grass surround her. Jumping up off her knees she marches to the full bucket of water and smacks it over with her foot. Sharp pains shoot up through her toe to her knee as she hops on one leg. Clutching her toe she tips over and lies, unmoving in the mud. She tips her head back. The rain drops cold sensations on her face; she opens her mouth to let them in. Blood washes from her body as she shuts her eyes and tries to disappear into the ground.

* * * * *

"Carol? Carol!"

Lwendo grabs Carol's face in between his two hands and shakes it gently.

"Carol! Wake up, Wake up!"

Opening one eye, she sees her little brother's worried face and sits up.

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing. We couldn't find you."

"It's not a big deal, Lwendo. Where is there to go anyway?"

Carol rubs her eyes and walks to the well, picking up the jug lying on its side in the dirt. After filling it up she scoops handfuls to rinse off the back of her head and neck, careful to keep any water from dripping from her hands. Lifting her head she sees her two younger brothers watching her, trying their best to hold back the tears. Their shirts only come to their belly buttons, showing off their bloated stomachs. Boney arms and legs stick out of their loosely fitted clothes. Their two small hands weave together for comfort. Carol hangs her head and takes a deep breath.

"I'll go make you some breakfast."

Grabbing the last corn husk, Carol begins to pound it into meal. Outside, Makupa and Lwendo wrestle with each other, kicking up dust clouds. She looks past them, searching for any forgotten corn on the stalks in the withering field. Shaking her head, she divides the small pile of corn meal in half, hoping to save something for the next day.

* * * * *

Late afternoon rolls by and the two little boys kick around a ball they made from wrapped up plastic bags. Carol stands off to the side, thatching their roof—the rain had poured right through it the night before. Lwendo picks up sticks from the ground and starts to bang them against the ground, shaking his head with the rhythm. Wrapping the bundles of grass together tighter, Carol stops and clenches her fist.

“Do you ever stop? You call that music? You don’t even have drums, let alone the beat to play one! Why do you even try when you know you will never get one? You will never get one! Why do you even try?”

She screams at him and looks up through tears at his big almond eyes. He drops the sticks in his hands and stares at the ground. Carol runs toward him. He reaches for her as she scoops him up in her arms and rocks him back and forth.

“I am sorry. Sorry, sorry, sorry. I didn’t mean it, Lwendo. I am so sorry. You will get a drum; I know mommy always promised you would get a drum. If you had one I know you would be the best drummer in the village.”

Flies and mosquitoes buzz around the two embracing each other. Lwendo pulls away from Carol’s chest and wraps his arms around her neck.

“I don’t need a drum, Carol. You don’t have to get me a drum. Just don’t go. Stay with us tonight.”

“I will, I promise.”

* * * * *

“It doesn’t take much, does it, for you to be happy?” Carol muses as she watches Makupa dance barefoot in the dirt. He sees her watching him and seeks more attention, flailing his arms and legs to some invisible rhythm in his head. Smiling at the sky, he spins towards her with arms outstretched and lands in her lap, giggling at the world circling in his eyes. Carol winces at the pain it causes to leave Makupa on her, but soon forgets it as she sees his grinning face. He opens his mouth into a full smile and shows off his three missing teeth. Both

their stomachs grumble together, and Makupa pleads to Carol with his eyes. Her chest aches.

"If only I could give you two what you need." She scans the flat landscape for anywhere to find help, but all she sees is dried, brown grass growing forever into the horizon. Their "home" stands in shambles after the storm with gaping holes in the walls. Lwendo hunches over and coughs in the doorway. Blood covers his hands. She runs over and wipes off his little fingers with her skirt. His tiny wrists and forearms are covered in small sores. Carol shakes her head and bites her lip, trying to hold back tears. Lwendo notices her worried expression and pulls his arms away.

"I'm fine." He glances up at Carol and gives her an encouraging smile, but Carol hides her face in his shoulder instead, wrapping her arms around his skinny frame.

"I know you are fine," she mumbles into his bare neck. But she does not let go. His arms tighten around her back, but Carol cannot find any comfort in the embrace. She remembers her mother. Her mother lying there sprawled out in the dirt, blood pouring out of her mouth and coating her hands. Her black skin covered in dust and bruises. The couch flipped over on its side, pictures and clay pots strewn about the room. She remembers picking up the blanket off the ground. Wrapping her mother's body in it, Carol laid next to her and rested her head on her mother's cold chest for just a moment. Wishing more than anything that she would hear that familiar heartbeat, wishing more than ever to feel her mother's touch. Carol remembers the night before, standing in her mother's doorway, watching her cough into a blood-soaked rag. For months she had been too sick to get out of bed. She said she was fine too and sent her three children to bed. Carol awoke to the screams of her mother choked in blood. She shot out of bed, ran to the next room, and found her uncle. Throwing herself at him, she jumped on his back and tried to pull him off of her mother. She felt his big hand on her neck, she felt it squeezing as he lifted her off and tossed her into the wall.

* * * * *

Curled up together to get warm under the small blanket they shared, the three orphans listen to their stomachs cry with the crickets outside. Suddenly Carol remembers when her mother cooked crickets for them to eat when they had no corn. Turning to Lwendo, she asks,

"Hey? Do you want to play a game with your little brother?" He lifts his head.

"Yeah!" he said. Makupa, too, is now looking up and smiling despite the cold.

"How about you two go catch as many crickets as you can? And I'll go get some water?" It doesn't take much convincing. The two little boys shoot up, pushing each other out the door. Grabbing the metal bucket, Carol heads to the well.

* * * * *

Rustling in the bushes behind her makes Carol speed up her walk.

"Please, no. Oh, God. Please, not again," she pleads to the sky, glancing behind her. As she turns around, she stops. In front of her, a tall skinny man holds an apple.

"Hello girl."

Carol takes two steps back, apprehensive, but then he smiles and holds out the big, red apple.

"What do you want?" She does not come any closer, but turns to face him. He looks her up and down and nods to her.

"Not much," he snickers, "A trade, you could say. You're probably hungry. Do you want this apple or not?" Carol stares at him in disbelief.

"No," She growls, "I would rather die."

"Alright, starve then. You might rather die, but what about your family? Would they rather die?" His eyes are still fixed on her body. She can see what he wants in his eyes and on his face. She knows it well. As he walks away Carol remembers her two brothers with their bloated bellies and shivering, skinny shoulders, catching crickets in the bush. She remembers Lwendo's bloody hands.

"Wait." She whispers, looking down. With that he turns around, drops the apple in the dust, and laughs,

"I knew you'd come around."

* * * * *

Tugging her over-sized shirt over her skinny brown shoulder, Carol wanders out of a small brick hut holding the apple. Stumbling home, she stands in the door of the chicken coop, drops the apple in Lwendo's hands, and collapses into the hay. Makupa and Lwendo gaze at the apple and then glance at Carol.

"Eat it." She grunts, turning her head away from them. They do not take a second thought and bite into it. Carol smiles, listening to her two younger brothers eat, but stops wondering if it was worth it.

Was it worth selling her body for an apple? Her stomach lurchs, but then she feels a small hand on her cheek.

"Here." Lwendo holds out the half-eaten apple and smiles.

"Thank you."

"You are welcome!" Lwendo stands up straighter and smirks at Makupa, who still has his eyes focused on the apple, but crouches to cough a second later. Smiling, he tries to hide the pain from Carol, but she sees the blood through his teeth. After her first couple of bites, Carol gives the apple back to her brothers.

"You two have the rest. I'm done." Makupa jumps for the apple. After giving Carol a quick hug he runs to Lwendo with the apple, holding it like a treasure.

* * * * *

Carol tucks her blanket around Lwendo's boney shoulders. His whole body convulses with each violent cough. Blood seeps into the ground around him. He takes a shallow gasp and lets out a whimper. Carol lies behind him with her arm around his shivering body. Forgetting to be strong, she lets the tears flow freely down her face and onto his dusty cheek. Suddenly Lwendo stops shaking. Sobbing, Carol sits up, raises Lwendo into her arms, and kisses his forehead. Makupa slowly lifts one of Lwendo's limp arms around him as he sits in Carol's lap with his brother. Holding Lwendo's cold hands, Makupa buries his head in Carol's neck and rocks with her. The two fall asleep crying in their chicken coop holding Lwendo, long after his body has lost its warmth.

* * * * *

Water sloshes over the rim of the red clay pot and lands on her brown shoulder. She pauses to make sure no water has splashed on to the sleeping bundle on her back, straightens the jug on her head, and continues singing down the dirt path. "Mwamba, Mwamba...Mwamba, ey. Mwamba, Mwamba, oyesase, a Mwamba, Mwamba, ey."

As Carol gathers the dusty, dry corn from the crunchy stalks, she watches her mother come to her. Her mother's smile comforts her dry throat and aching belly, but before she can smile back, her mother disappears, leaving Carol humming in the dark, desperately trying to cling to the last edges of her dreams as they slip away into the sunrise.

* * * * *

A rooster crows in the distance and wakes Carol. She turns over in the dirt to look at Makupa. One of his tiny arms lies across Lwendo's unmoving chest.

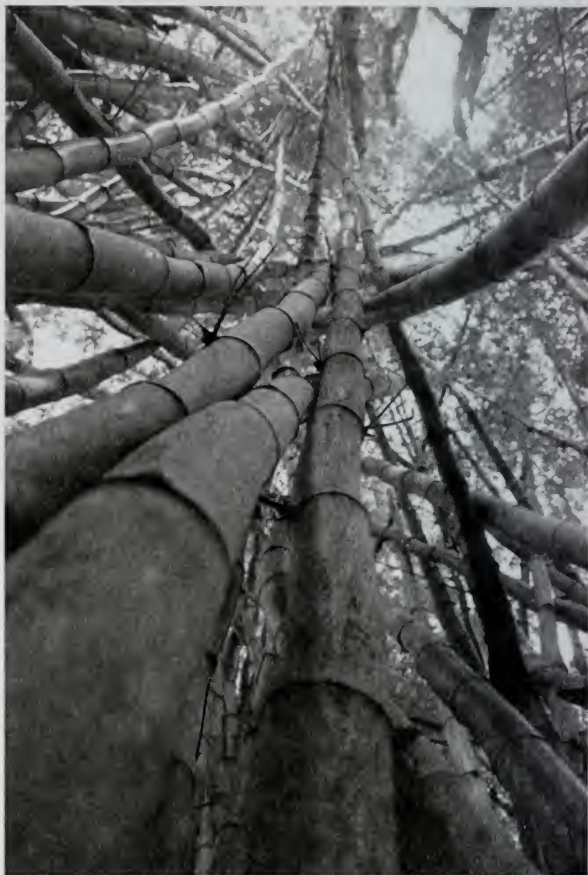
"I'm not a big girl," She mumbles to herself. Standing up, she digs a shallow grave for Lwendo, and then wakes Makupa. Carol carefully slips her arms under Lwendo and lifts him up. Makupa cradles his head as they slowly lower him into the ground. Then Makupa starts to sing in a hushed, shaky voice.

"Mwamba, mwamba, mwamba, ey," but then he stops and looks down at Carol gathering up a handful of rocky earth. She nods to him to follow. They both stand and slowly let the dirt run through their fingers into Lwendo's grave. Then Carol finishes the song.

"Mwamba, mwamba, oyesase, a Mwamba, mwamba, ey." Taking Makupa's hand, she leads him away from their brother toward the well in silence. Staggering along, their silhouettes get smaller and smaller until they melt into the horizon and cannot be distinguished from the brush and trees.

Bamboo

Lacey Clawson



Baby Jellyfish

Diana Palmer

The sun manages the day.
The moon manages the night,
I was told
of the Greater.
The Lesser.
The Creator -

God, my God
In my baby's smile at midnight-

a moment similar to when
you showed me a tank
full of moons-
quivering blue
like shaken silk.

and in the ocean, that slanted afternoon I saw my life's map in the
sand neon beige, watery paths -when the jelly fish stung blue fire on
my back you tore its skin off my skin took my hand, quiet hero while i
sobbed back to shore.

we didn't know i was pregnant then,
but later i wondered if the jelly fish sting was why she grew eye-
lashes overnight and turned the veins in my breast a pronounced green
and blue.

Politics

Debbie Frampton



I sing the song of a caged parakeet...

Mitchell Coker

As I sit in my upstairs apartment, pecking at the keys of my laptop, I can't help but notice the faint rustle of a caged parakeet pecking at his birdseed in the apartment below. And as I perch here, I, myself, can't help but rustle in my chair. While this is Hawaii and I can hear the songs of many birds through our window slats, all of which have been flung wide to welcome in the ocean gale, there is one bird's song, in particular, that I find most delightful and most soothing. He seems pleased with himself, that parakeet, and pleased with his situation, down there in that closed-off world – safe away from all the disasters of nature. Life is comfortable for him and he is sure to live to a ripe old age. Every so often he lets out a chirp of pleasure, as if reminding us that he is there and that he is contentedly happy. Admittedly, the song of a caged parakeet easily wins out in pleasantness over the incessant crowing of dozens upon dozens of our neighborhood's country roosters.

This is Hawaii, and country roosters seem to be more abundant than would be expected in a tropical paradise. In fact, it's not unusual to see a troupe of giggling, young Polynesian boys chasing after a whole flock of chickens, yard through yard. Every so often you'll see a haole boy running with them, along for the ride. From what I can tell, the boys are usually just after one of the birds in the flock – most often a big healthy rooster with a magnificent comb and great colors. I think that the other less vibrant, and therefore, less sought-after chickens just run along in the pack for enjoyment's sake (or maybe out of confusion's sake). Either way, they run along, darting here and there in a scramble and flurry, unmatched by even the most upbeat riot. This scene, one of the more exciting Hawaiian experiences, is not an image advertised alongside a box of chocolate-covered macadamia nuts or a bus tour of Waimea Canyon, but is a uniquely Hawaiian experience, nonetheless. And as for those, it should be noted: uniquely Hawaiian experiences are in abundant supply.

I can stand at my kitchen sink and take in one of the most breathtaking mountain vistas. The tropical mountains start just two houses down the street and rise abruptly, like the massive form of sleeping green giants, blanketed by the cloud-speckled sky above them.

National-Geographic ought to come to take pictures from my kitchen sink window; they would sell more magazines. I can walk ten paces across my little apartment to a large bay window in my living room (I

sit below it now, as I type), and take in an equally breathtaking view, this time in the opposite direction. Out of this window, one can see those same mountains rolling down through our small village and spilling past the beaches into the ocean below. The view of the sunrise out of this window is particularly magnificent; huge, rounded ocean clouds are colored by the rising sun below them, which dances across the billowing waves in a narrow path of dazzling golden light, pointing itself directly at my bay window. This is a scene all arrayed in splendor bright, but a sight that lasts just minutes (not more than five) and is easily missed by the impatient. The entire view, from either side of the house, is a truly magnificent instance of God's creation. And though the mountain's path is inviting – it starts not two hundred paces from my front door – and though I'm constantly petitioned by peers to go down to enjoy that beach (they seem to crow worse than the roosters), I find that I am most content rustling in my chair and pecking at my keyboard, simply enjoying God's creation in my own small way. Unusual, I know, but I sing the song of a caged parakeet.

I remember a poem by Maya Angelou that shares its name with her first autobiography, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. The caged bird in her poem, with its clipped wings and morbid overtones, sings nothing more than of its longing for freedom. This bird aches to be released, out on the open winds, dipping its wings in golden sunlight. The poem is wonderful, to be sure, and I think that it brought some tears to my eyes the first time that I read it. I felt her song, the song of that caged bird – a song of freedom. But I do not hear those morbid overtones in the trill of the caged parakeet in the apartment below. His tune is quite different, and I feel to sing along with him as I sit here and type, looking out my large bay window. Unusual, I know, but I sing the song of a caged parakeet.

Several months ago I left my home in Las Vegas and came here to complete some classes at Brigham Young University-Hawaii. I did this in order to escape the dregs of an education at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, which lost credibility in my mind by choosing to offer several classes in both exotic dancing and alcohol consumption (besides which, if that's not enough, they're not accredited in Psychology). In order to come to Hawaii and obtain a more meaningful education, I flew through a whirlwind of decisions and constructed a cage of financial, occupational, and personal commitments that, at the time, I wasn't so sure I'd be able to fulfill. When I moved in to this particular apartment I knew there would be drawbacks, restrictions even. For starters, rent in Hawaii is anything but forgiving (not to mention the price of groceries – milk alone costing \$7 a gallon). Not

being able to afford a car and being so far from campus, I knew I would often have to take the bus – Aloha~TheBus. Now, besides there being an inordinate amount of weirdoes on TheBus (a fact that I find adds to its overall ambiance and charm), riding TheBus daily means adding an extra 1 to 2 hours of travel time to my schedule. I find this constricting, but the time I spend waiting at the bus-stop gives me a chance to just sit and think – an activity I’m actually fond of. Never mind the weirdoes – like the unintelligible old lady (tattooed and toothless), who decided to kick at me from across the aisle the other day. They will usually leave you alone when you just ignore them. I actually fervently enjoy riding the bus, as restricting as it may be. Unusual, I know, but I sing the song of a caged parakeet.

When I signed up to take 20 credit-hours this semester, I knew there would be drawbacks. Partly, I think I did not expect to have an active social life, having been recently engaged. As it has turned out, I probably spend just as much time with friends as I do in the books (and certainly more time than I spend with my fiancé, who stayed back in Vegas while I finish school). The time I spend with friends crowds in on my time for study, and vice-versa. Beyond that, I think I kept adding classes to my schedule like they were pieces of pie on an all-you-can-eat dessert cart – a little apple, a little razzeberry, a little pecan, and some vanilla ice-cream to go with. I love to learn and just couldn’t pass up Essentials of Conducting with Jerold Ottley (former conductor of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir – amazing, I know) or a creative writing class that will do nothing to satisfy my graduation requirements. None of this makes my schedule any more flexible; none of this frees up any of my time. And still, I rather enjoy that I spend 20 hours of the week in class and that I spend countless hours more working on various class assignments (though, they seem to have no end). Sometimes it means turning down dinner with friends, or missing the Friday-night movie, but it is the lot that I have chosen. Unusual, I know, but I sing the song of a caged parakeet.

When I exacerbated the situation by signing up as a 20-hour-a-week tutor in the Reading/Writing Center, I knew that there would be drawbacks. To be pointed, I needed the money. To be pointed, when I maxed-out my two credit cards into \$4,000 debt, I had no idea just how many drawbacks there would be. Thus, I need the money. And so I work an extra 20 hours a week in effort to try to remedy my situation. But, wouldn’t you know it, I’m pleased with the fact that I am 21 years old, own a fully paid-off vehicle back in Las Vegas (paid-off with my own \$7,000 cash, I might add – no help from mommy and daddy), and that I am putting myself through an undergraduate education.

Twenty extra hours a week on a job (devoted to the good cause of peer-tutoring) keeps me from feeling overwhelmed by debt. Though it crowds in on my daily schedule, I appreciate my time there. Unusual, I know, but I sing the song of a caged parakeet.

As I've mentioned, I left my beautiful fiancé back in Las Vegas for these four months of school. I knew there would be drawbacks. She stayed back to fulfill her responsibility-filled position of running a large day-care center in the Las Vegas valley, which she would have given up save for the fact that there is no one else that could run it as well as she does. She is truly amazing that way, and I miss being able to hear her wonderful stories of each day's events. Many times, I can't find even a small moment free to flip open my cell phone and punch in her speed-dial (333 – her favorite number). When we do talk, it often seems as though we are communicating across a Grand-Canyon-like void, desperately trying to capture each other's ideas, made faint by the wind (she'll tell you that sometimes that wind is just me, absent-mindedly breathing into my phone's mic). Being so far away from her, having spent an entire year and half at her side, is difficult and confusing to say the least. To say the most, at some point I considered that moving away from her might break us up all together. Thankfully those considerations have been completely obliterated: we are sublimely happy with one another and will be married before summer's end. Though I miss her terribly, I know that I am here for a reason and that makes it easier to enjoy my time here, even if it is time spent away from her. Unusual, I know, but I sing the song of a caged lovebird.

To those on the outside, I live perched in a cage of bus rides, classes, homework, real work, and long-distance romance. Indeed, I may. Others will chase after their roosters, here and there in a flurry of giggles and excitement – or perhaps they are the ones being chased. And, I suppose for them, it is a bliss-filled life, whether for the enjoyment of it or out of sheer confusion. But, perched in my cage, I have my mountain vistas and ocean sunrises, a promise of a beautiful wife, and my laptop, at which I peck away. Rustling from here to there, I sing my song. And it's not always the happiest tune, but it is my tune, and I shall sing it well. Unusual, I know, but I sing the song of that caged parakeet below. It is a song of gladness; it is a song of contentment.

Rhetoric

Debbie Frampton

and now
behold,
verily
i
say unto you,
Wo!
and i
say unto you,
thou shalt
hearken!

And i
speak unto you again
exceedingly
insomuch
that now ye know.

know ye not?

do ye not suppose
all these things?
yea, ye know!

nevertheless,
notwithstanding
thus saith i,

wherefore
inasmuch as ye would,
and i
desire that ye should,
it must needs be—

for i have spoken it
and it came to pass.

Autumn Frost

Celesta Hubner



Of Sugar and Tripe and an Orange So Ripe

Kavita Chetty

I have a heritage rich in culture, full of mystical stories. But the stories I enjoy the most are the funny anecdotes my mother would entertain me with as I perched on the kitchen counter, helping her peel garlic and onions. One particular story stands out in my mind.

It was a hot summer day in 1967. In a high-rise building in Singapore, a week before Deepavali, a Hindu holy festival, my grandmother had been and boiling and frying, preparing all these lovely sweetmeats, none of which could be eaten before prayers were uttered over them on the Eve of Deepavali.

Stretched out on the living room couch was my mother, reading as usual. At her feet sat her little sister, my Aunt Rani, watching in awe as my mother flipped page after page after page.

"How do you do that?" Aunt asked.

"Do what?" asked Ma vaguely.

"Just...read." Aunt said the word as if she'd tasted dirt. Ma didn't hear her. Aunt sniffed the air and sighed audibly. Thoughts of sug-arplums had begun to dance in her head.

"I want some luckri," she announced wistfully to Ma, knowing full well no one was to touch the sweets. Ma suddenly looked over her book at her sister, a mischievous glimmer dancing in her smile.

"Why don't you go get some?"

Aunt looked confused. "But Amma said—"

"Never mind what Amma said," Ma continued excitedly, "She's not in the kitchen at the moment. You could get some sweets now and she'd never know!" Aunt's eyes widened and, with a little push from my mother, she slipped off the couch and carefully crept into the kitchen, a regular Tom Sawyer after the sugar bowl. As she entered the kitchen the smell of tripe hovered and dipped around her. Grandma had left dinner to simmer on the stove.

Aunt searched the kitchen quickly, expertly, and as she raised her eyes to the tins stored above the stove, her eyes gleamed. She gripped the countertop and hoisted herself onto its smooth surface. She inched her way carefully towards the stove and stretched out a determined hand. Her tongue unconsciously darted to the outer corner of her mouth. She could feel the heat and smoke of the boiling pot wisp past her arm.

At that moment she heard the familiar slap-slap of Grandma's leather sandals heading towards the kitchen. Aunt let out a panicked squeal and leapt off the counter. What she didn't count on was to find

her elbow plummeting into the boiling pot of tripe like a carrot into onion dip. Later my superstitious Grandma would declare the accident a punishment from the gods for trying to desecrate the prasadam, or holy food offerings. So, following a scream loud enough to appease the anger of the gods, the sound of sandals quickened and multiplied, and both Grandma and Ma hurled themselves into the kitchen. For the entire week Aunt had to walk around with her arm raised at about ninety degrees, the skin under her arm horribly bloated with pus.

The neighborhood kids couldn't help themselves. It was quite a sight, this little girl with her arm in the air, and a large bubble of pus the size of a melon along her armpit. The teasing was never very witty or clever, but the comments hurt my Aunt. And Ma, feeling guilty that she was partly to blame, came and defensively sat by my sister.

Leaning up against the balcony was Bart, eating an orange and letting the citrus juice run down his large hands. He had once chased after Aunt with a dead cockroach, giggling at the high screams that erupted from her. Aunt looked at him warily as she clasped her doll to her with her free hand. Ma was next to her, reading, and Aunt turned her head once again to watch her. Bart took that opportunity to take aim and hurl a piece of orange rind at Aunt's wound, bursting it open. The scream he was waiting for pierced the sky. Before anyone could say tripe or orange or sweets Ma had flung her book to the ground and had Bart pinned under her, her tiny fists pummeling into him as if she were merely kneading dough. All the children stopped to watch, accompanying Ma's cracking knuckles with horrified, delighted gasps. Aunt's cries brought Grandma to the scene and she quickly dragged Bart out from underneath Ma.

As Grandma dressed Aunt's wounds, she handed her a single sweet.

"Already gods punish you more than enough," Grandma rationalized in her sweet, lilting English, "Might as well eat." Aunt smiled gratefully over to where Ma was on the couch, only to find Ma's head bent back over her book. Aunt's smile curled down into a puzzled frown. How could that sister of hers read so much?

B&W Corot Study

Katbleen Majdali



Supplication for the Ko'olaus

Shem Greenwood

Take me out to the woods and leave me there.
Let the sermons of frogs, the persistence of crickets
Undo me
Disrupt my insulation
Strip me down till I am nothing
but alive
Let ironwoods and pines wash me with whispers
Turn all my bones heavenward and make me a tree.

In the matrices of a raven's nest
I will calculate
A new obedience
To the laws I've long forgotten
The ones I forgot so I could grow old

There is no pain in the fingers of a tree
No sorrowing beneath its bark
So let me stand, and blow, and shudder
My feet in the earth, my head full of honest gray sky
Let me fall, but like a tree and not a broken man.

The Psalm of Drew

Drew Mierzejewski

A chemical imbalance in the brain runs in my family. Did I ever tell you that? I can't think that I have, or that I even have thought of telling you. But it does and for the lack of better words, I have that chemical imbalance. It seems that my brain does not function the same way other peoples' do. Deep down there is a part of me that is missing. You have all seen that commercial for Zoloft, where the shapeless white blob is so darn sad, not even the ladybugs can cheer him up. But show a picture of little black dots floating from Side A to Side B and you have the basic gist of what is going on. It's all a matter of a lack of chemicals and when you get all those chemicals, the blob becomes happy and the sun starts to shine. Or so Zoloft commercials tell us.

Anyway, I have that. That blob, that's me. Those black dots are my chemicals and the whole Side A and Side B is my brain. The long and short of it is that I am depressed. There, I said it. I am depressed. Don't worry though, I won't contaminate you with my sadness germs or infect you with my chemical imbalance. I am totally safe...I think. Of course it's not a secret that I am depressed. Never has been, but I get the feeling that if my mother found out I was writing about this and that I would eventually let other people (heaven forbid) read this, she would be flabbergasted. I always thought that my face revealed how self-loathing and critical I am. But the truth remains, I am depressed.

It all started about, let's see now, oh I am not totally sure how long, but let's just say that the time was long ago and far away. People always described me as a happy kid. Most of you reading this right now probably have no clue that there are days for me that are as dark as dark can be, like an open field on a new moon. You probably did not know that I take medication. That I get up every morning and take 20 milligrams of Lexapro. But I do. Every day. But like I said, as a kid, people thought I was normal, average. I got depressed sometimes, like everyone does. But at times that despairingly dark feeling would not go away. Some days it hurt to see people smile and laugh and live life like sunshine constantly followed their path. Like they had just won the lottery or met their true love for the first time. To see people be happy, truly happy or at least look like they were truly happy. Even with this grey pall over my life, I never told anyone how I felt. I figured it was not my place after all. This was my problem, mine and mine alone to conquer or live with.

Time went on. High school came and went. There were happy days, there were sad days. There were a lot of in-between days, but there were also those days that lingered like shapeless fog over a clouded bay. Those were the days that wore on and on with no definite end in sight and at times I thought that I could only make it to sun down. There and no farther and then I must surely die. But I always did make it farther. I made it to next week, then next month and then next year. I made it to graduation and then summer jobs and time with family. Life seemed so neat and clean to other people I encountered. Their experiences were either black and there was white. They had a good day or a bad day, nothing was middle ground in their lives, while to me, my life was a constant grey area.

Grey was the color of my depression, colorless paper pulp that clumped together and stuck to the walls of my life. Black and white came and went, but those grey blobs...they stayed, whether in sleeping or in waking, those grey blobs surrounded me. But that was high school. Didn't everyone feel that way about there adolescent time in the halls of their high schools? Didn't everyone get depressed because "so and so" did not ask them out, or they did not make the team or were not as popular as they thought they should be? Weren't all those years of frustration and heartache natural? I thought that they had to be. Nothing was wrong with me! I was just sad, like everyone else...wasn't I?

I made it to college. The big adventure and the hardest experience I had ever done or even comprehended doing before. My mother and father would not be around to lean on. My brothers and sisters had their own lives to lead and I had mine to start.

At first my life was ok. Not good, not bad, just ok. Sure, it was tough being in a new place and meeting new people, trying to remember names and places, learning how to do my own laundry, manage my own finances and make my own way. That first semester was hard, but not because of classes or social problems, mostly because I was lonely. I know how infantile that sounds. "Drew was lonely. Drew had no friends. Drew felt like no one cared." It was pretty stupid as I look back now. I had friends, I had family. I had money to spend, people who cared about me and wanted me to be happy. But at times those four walls would close in on me. I could feel the happiness sucked from my being and out the windows into the rainy night. It hurt and I could do nothing about it.

Life does not wait for you. I found that out quick. People don't care that you need time. They care that you get your life moving again, that you snap out of it and move on. "Didn't you hear about so-and-so

whose mother died? They are in the library right now working on their senior project. Time waits for no man!" They were right, of course. Time did not wait for me. It moved on and I put in my mission papers. Now here was an experience I could get lost in. Missionary work! The very idea of working for the Lord actually made me happy, which was a big deal for me at the time. I had waited my whole life to be a missionary and I trusted in all the stories I had ever been told about Ammon and the Sons of Mosiah. I had my whole heart in phrases like, "The Best Two Years" and "I hope they call me on a mission." I had spent my entire life studying to become a missionary. I had a firm testimony of the gospel and I felt I was ready to take on the challenges of being a full time Elder in the service of the Lord. I was so excited and was even more excited when I they called me stateside to Boise, Idaho. How amazing was that? My horizon was clear and sunlit. I was sure that dark days of clouded grey skies were far behind me.

Interesting fact about life is that missions, no matter how hard you prepare (or how hard you work and plan), don't ever turn out the way you think. What I had planned to be the happiest experience in my life did not bear the kind of fruit I was thinking of. Now, I know what you are thinking in that aghast voice that's echoing through your head: "You hated your mission!" If you are thinking that I will have to respond with a full-hearted denial of such a notion. I will tell you that I did not hate my service to the Lord. In fact, I learned more about myself during that time than any other time in my life. But the Lord chose a peculiar time to have my depression strike with a vengeance.

What had once been maybe a few days of depression, maybe even a couple of weeks at the most, began to stretch on farther. My days of feeling down turned to weeks, from weeks to months and before I even knew what was happening I was cast into a deep black pit of self-loathing and fathomless depression that threatened to swallow me.

I lived in a world of grey. Like those black and white pictures you see your grandparents in. Even when the sun shone and color sprang into the world, even when I worked harder than I had ever worked in my life. Even when my life should have been great, better than great, the greyiness stayed, filling in the edges of my vision and I wallowed in it. My life became a quagmire of sadness and no matter how hard I tried, no matter how hard I worked or prayed, my helpless feeling stayed with me and sucked me down, suffocating me.

I felt like I had been placed in a steel cage in a dark room. Four walls of solid metal and only your own delusional inadequacies to keep you company. I felt like what those pets must feel when people move. Locked in a tiny space, alone, helpless, with no hope of escape and no

end to the long trip in sight. I felt completely powerless to stop this grey onslaught that engulfed me. I knew I could not go home; the shame would have been too great after I had looked forward to my mission for years, only to become so depressed that I could not even function in the morning, but at the same time I could not stay and wallow in these feelings. I was trapped, no escape, and the grey began to flood my little steel box.

During these days I found it hard to breathe, hard to think, hard to speak or even blink. That's right, it hurt to even blink. Time slowed during those days, the seconds ticking by weeks. I felt so down-trodden, like I had been hit by a semi-truck and had welcomed the crushing blow. Those were my hypocrite days. I had to go to doorsteps and say through clenched teeth, "Hello, we bring you a message of happiness that will bring fathomless joy! Happy! Happy! Happy!" How could I say that? How could I teach them about the most important message in their lives when I was floundering in that very message? How was this happiness? How was this joy? I felt so false. I hated myself for feeling that way because I knew that the gospel I was bringing them was true. This really was a gospel of happiness I was telling them about. This really was the way to eternal life and joy. But if this was the true gospel, why was I not feeling the rewards of it? I was worthy, I was working and I was doing the best I could. Did the gospel not work for me? The gospel had at one time, or so I thought. Why was the gospel not work now?

One night, at the height (or should I say depth) of my depressed state, I lied in bed tossing like a landed trout. Sleep eluded me. It hung before my eyes but always shied away when I reached out to grab its fluffy edges. I was worried. Worried about what was going to happen. I did not want to go home, I really did love being a missionary, I loved the people I was teaching; I loved serving the Lord, but for some reason my love for my work all meant nothing to my brain. I continued in that dense fog. I felt so unworthy. What had I done? Was there some major problem in my past? Did the Lord all of a sudden stop loving me? Had he given up on Elder Mierzejewski once and for all? I wanted to know so badly that it hurt worse than the pain I was already feeling.

So, I went into the living room and prayed. I am not sure how long I knelt there or how many times I started and stopped, sometimes just saying the same phrase over and over. I was scared. I was hurt. I was at rock bottom and I needed to know what was going to happen to me.

There, in that little room in Idaho, I felt the Lord's love for me stronger than I had ever felt it in my life. There was no heavenly choir, no celestial messenger coming to reveal my destiny. But I felt peace for

the first time in months and slowly, ever so slowly, the fog began to lift, if only for a second, and I could feel and almost see how the Lord saw me. I was not worthless; I was not a hypocrite or even a terrible person. I was his missionary. I was his servant and he loved me for it. The depression was not a punishment on me; instead it was more of the price I had to pay to get to know my Savior just a little bit better. And even though it was far from over, I knew that he was there with me and that I would eventually be ok.

Months passed before that prayer was truly fulfilled. I had many more sleepless nights and many more long days before I truly found out what was going to happen to me. But on that night I did know that God loved me. He knew me. ME! Little, imperfect, delusional, depressed me. He knew my sorrows; he knew my pain, my grief and the anguish that engulfed me and he understood. I felt peace that night and I knew that I was going to be ok. Eventually.

I never finished my full 24-month mission. I made it to about 18 months as an Elder and was then sent home when the medication they had me on stopped working. Now I had to endure another heartbreaking experience. I had to tell my family that I could not take it anymore, that the medication had run its course and was not working and that the doctors who I had been seeing felt that it would be best if I went home.

I still remember that day when the mission president had me call home and talk to my parents about how depressed I had become and we all decided it was best that I go home. I will never forget that moment in the conversation as my father asked me, "What do you want to do, son?" I paused, the seconds ticked by into eternity. Finally I said that I did not know what I wanted. He repeated the question, "But what do YOU want?" I broke down then, and I heard myself say that I could not take it anymore. That the medication had stopped working and that they had recommended that I give up, that I quit and go home. Oh how I did not want to say those words, but lo and behold, they tumbled out of my mouth and I could not recall them.

I went home. I packed it up and left. Everyone told me I had done a good job, that I had served an honorable mission and that I should be proud of who I was and what I had done. But I was not proud. Pride was nowhere in my brain at that moment. There was only shame, shame that I had let my family down, myself down and even God down. I felt like my world was at an end and for all I knew the sun had stopped and left me in a dark prison for the rest of eternity. My mother and father kept telling me I had done what I was supposed to do. I had finished my course and had fought the good fight. But their words fell upon my unfeeling heart like stones. I could not and

would not believe them. I had lost my world, I had lost who I thought I was and my world had come to an abrupt end.

But, the truth was that my world had not ended. I know that it is easy to reflect on the past, but for me that statement is true. As I look back I can see that all of these experiences, the grey fog rising around me, my sleepless nights and heartbreaking encounters with myself happened for a reason. I can see that all my depression experiences have been part of a grander scheme. Of course there is pain; of course there is anguish and even depression in this grey world. But there is also life here too. There is hope for better days and the chance to make each day better than the last. It's what makes us human, the chance to make our lives as we see fit.

I still get depressed. I still take my meds and there are some days when the whole world turns the familiar shade of grey. But now I know that that is just part of my price. It is that little part of my world that makes me want to be better. It is all part of that great plan that our father in heaven has given us and whether it be depression, or personality flaws, or family dysfunctions or that little bit of humanity that makes your life just a little bit tougher, remember that you are not alone in your plight. That you have someone in your corner, who knows exactly how you feel. So, keep your chin up. And as cheesy and corny as that sounds, I know I am going to, and when life in this little grey world gets tough, remember you can turn and find peace on your living room floor while on your knees.

Life Hawaiian Style

Melody Griffith



Digression of Progression

Jared Zane Kessie

Strangled muscles and sinew, puncturing my lungs and breaking through my rib cage.

Fidgeting eyes, rolling, strolling, every which way but straight.

The soft lighting echoes the somewhat rhythmic pattern of insignificant dinner conversations.

Who are you?

The hair on my neck TENSES, straightens, falls, and then straightens again as my mind incessantly flashes pictures of times not forgotten, nor remembered.

The metamorphosis continues...

Retinas burning red and orange with flames of confusion.

Fingers becoming claw-like, scratching at the blank expression left upon a distant face.

Hunched back. Taste of philosophical debates dripping from saliva-infested teeth.

Transforming.

My apologies for not completely stating the now-obvious fact that there are times when the mind and the body work against the soul and the heart.

Duel to the death.

I am but a melancholy causality of the ever increasing need for personal reflection.

But I cannot reflect when others are standing in my mirror.

Alone...I need to be alone.

Never completely alone.

Not without you....

Alone with you.

I must conquer change. Not change conquering me.

Progress.

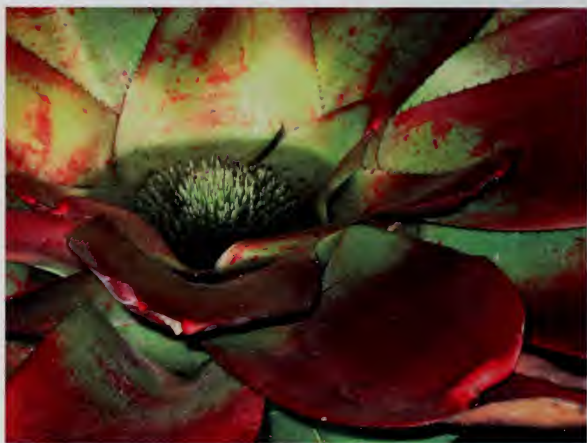
Collage

Perla Antoniak



Shallow Waters

Chris Coburn



Being Bishop

Brittney Betzer

His wrists and elbows buckled as he pushed her face into the snow, as though he were performing CPR. But he was doing the exact opposite of resuscitating life; he was taking it. Her pink winter coat floated on the top of the field and her dull blonde hair matted against her, the ice-topped snow around her head. Bits of yellow grain sprung up near the road that lined one side of the white fields.

A cool gray sky was falling all around Bishop. It hit the edges of his eyes like ink dripping into water. His arms felt strange, larger somehow. His jacket and shirt all felt too snug as though his small bicep was covered in thick nylon, like the white and tan leggings his aunt wore under her long skirt in winter. There would be more snow tomorrow.

His mother was frying ground beef in a large skillet when he came home. He breathed in the warm greasy air and watched her nudge the meat from side to side as runny yellow fat pooled in the bottom of the pan.

"Bishop?" said his mother. "Put your mittens on the heater and wash up."

"Damn it!" Bishop heard his mother shout as he wandered off. "Ramey, do that over the trash can!"

His mother was yelling at his older sister Ramey, who was slowly peeling brown russet potatoes and letting the starchy peelings fall to the wooden floor. Ramey scooted a bar stool closer to the trash can and resumed her mundane task, scraping the dry flesh from the outside of the potatoes. The metal peeler had revealed the flesh of apples, carrots and potatoes. Bishop imagined holding the cold steel handle of the blade; it was loose and even in pretense his mind presented it this way. He had held it before in real life, when his mother asked him to help bake or cook dinner. He had been asked to core apples and had learned that easily. Bishop's thin white hand had pressed the blade against his forearm and pulled it towards his face. Curly strips of his own fuzzy skin had fallen to the floor. They weren't floppy as he'd imagined them to be, similar to the steaks his mother pounded and covered in corn meal to fry on Saturdays. They'd more accurately resembled the potato skins that lay atop the day's trash, only longer.

"Bishop!" said his mom. "Help your sister set the table! And take off your damn mittens!"

He slowly took off the still damp mittens, brown with squares sewed into the top. His hands felt clammy, cold and wet. He had already removed his jacket and let it fall to the floor in the walkway.

He wanted to take off his shirt. Bishop lined his mittens up on top of their old heater. His sister's sparkly blue scarf was sliding off. He watched as it slid and liked that it was moving but hadn't yet decided to fall or stay put.

"Bishop!" his mother yelled again from the kitchen.

He gently fingered his sister's scarf, feeling the scratchy tinsel interweaved with yarn before laying it beside his mittens. He walked to the kitchen. His mom was using the electric can opener on two cans of green beans. Shepherd's Pie, thought Bishop. Ramey had moved on to shredding the orange block of mild cheddar cheese. She used a steak knife to slice the brick into rectangles and shoved them into the top of their mother's Salad Shooter. A piercing noise now accompanied the crackling of grease.

The potatoes were done. His mother had boiled them in a pot of water with salt and was now using two dishtowels with chickens on them to dump the steaming water into the sink. She strained the potatoes into a teal colander and shook it over the sink twice before returning the mushy bits to the pot. She used a wooden spoon to add Gold n' Soft margarine to it, added a splash of 2% milk, then pulled the black-handled masher out of the drawer. Her thick white arms had purple bruises and veins up the sides. She pounded the masher to the bottom of the pot. Bishop hated the masher, the wavy line hooked to the handle.

His mom asked him to get the glass baking dish out of the cupboard. He couldn't hear her and thus was caught eyeing the masher his mother held. When she shot her eyes to the side and hollered, "The baking dish! Bishop, the glass one!" He knew then to grab it.

His mom was getting old. Though he was only seven, she would turn 50 next year. She was still beautiful to him. She had wrinkles and lines and she swiped black Cover Girl mascara onto her short lashes and rubbed Oil of Olay beauty fluid onto her dragging cheeks every morning. Her hands were always softer than bishop thought they would be. In the morning she would wake him up by pressing her cold palms against his forehead and cheeks. "Wake up, my baby," she hummed.

His mother lined the baking dish with butter, added the beans, meat and potatoes and topped it all with the cheese as Ramey took apart the salad shooter and dropped the pieces into the sink. After he and Ramey silently set the table, Bishop sat in front of the oven and watched as the cheese formed a thin rubbery layer on top of the pan.

"Dinner, kids. Bishop, move so I can get to it," said his mom.

Bishop and Ramey sat on a wooden bench and his mother in a padded arm chair. A tan plate was left empty at the head of the table. Bishop's mom scooped a pile of the Shepherd's Pie onto plates for him

and Ramey, and added a handful of bagged iceberg lettuce topped with blue cheese dressing on the side.

"Who'll pray?" asked his mom. The children stared. "Your father is late. Who'll pray?"

"It's Bishops turn," said Ramey flatly.

In bed that night, Bishop thought about what he would dream. Foods make you dream. Maybe he'd be building a fire in the mountains and roasting salmon, their metallic bodies weaved onto long metal rods. They had done that once; they went camping last summer with his Aunt Sandra's family, and his cousins and uncle showed them how to do it. He remembered this not because of the act, but because of the events that followed that week they spent in Boulder canyon. His uncle also showed them tin-foil dinners. Vegetables and raw meat were wrapped tightly into layers of tin-foil and thrown into the fire. Ramey's chicken was still raw when she ate it, and Bishop noticed the pink and white flesh enter her mouth several times.

The next week Ramey had to go to the doctor. He said she had the flu and that she should get an influenza shot the next spring. Ramey stayed up all day and all night holding her stomach and silently gulping and scraping the bathroom tiles. She had had three weeks of dialysis and a kidney transplant by the time Bishop's father could take off work to drive down. Bishop didn't know why she was sick, it didn't upset him, and he only thought about the red-headed nurse who checked out videos to him while his parents talked in the lounge. He watched Pete's Dragon and for the next few months was constantly preoccupied with burying things in his backyard.

When his mom couldn't find the electric shaver she used to trim his father's hair, she assumed she had misplaced it and when she was hanging up the laundry and sliced her middle toe on a sharp edge, she was furious. She told him that if it wouldn't wreck the landscaping she would have his bare ass out there until dawn, and everything resurfaced. Two books. Crest toothpaste tube, Ramey's travel blow-dryer, an orange, a pink dish sponge, AAA batteries, bag of candy corn. The neighbors' clothes pins and T.V. remote. Two of his cousin's action figures, soup ladle.

* * *

Bishop looked at the speckled ceiling that was only a few feet away from his head on the top bunk bed and saw a ballerina. She had long skinny legs and her face was featureless and was still able to look down. A white smear in the paint became a woman. It became something. Bishop pulled his thick pillow from behind his head and squeezed it to his chest. He wrapped his arms and legs around it and

as he brought his feet and scrawny calves up, a deep, almost cow-like moan escaped from between his clenched teeth.

He woke then next morning suddenly and not to the comfort of his mothers voice, but to Ramey's. She hit the edge of his oak bunk with an old sneaker. Bishop looked over. She stood in the doorway, silent. After a few minutes of sharing a silent stare she walked down the hall. As he sat up, the sweat from sleep began to grow cold and Bishop quickly became aware of his naked body— which helped him to understand the distant and passive manner with which Ramey woke him.

It had been six months since Ramey had been released from the hospital. The Ecoli was gone and Ramey was home and his mother was on the phone to his father.

* * *

"I don't know..." said his mother sadly, "It just doesn't make sense how long it took them to find her."

She was silent for a few moments and held the phone to her ear with her shoulder. "Yes, seven months," she said. "Did anything else come up in the police report?" More silence. "A ladle? They found her with a ladle?"

Bishop looked at the front cover of the newspaper. "Girl's body found after months of disappearance, No suspects."

Two Sailors

Diana Palmer

I pulled all of the water into my corner and requested that we sit on
separate sailboats.
So we bobbed at intervals-

I rose, you fell.
I dipped, you surged.

The waves tossed like the heads of impatient horses Sometimes, I
couldn't see you above the spitting Sea Or anyone else, but myself.

Different Ways to See the World

Meng-Yu Lu



Warning: Hazardous to Nervous Fliers

Grace Lee

The odds of me dying tragically today are one to 365,000. The odds of me dying tragically...

"You're being awfully quiet," my friend said, glancing at me in the rearview mirror.

Mantra being broken, I clutched the backpack on my knees tighter, furtively rubbing my wet hands on the coarse fabric. The conversation in front resumed, and my friends' voices flowed past me together with the rows of white houses and olive cliffs that we were leaving behind. The Hawaiian road was as rutted as ever, but this morning I thought, "O, sweet earth, how I will miss the feeling of thee underneath my feet."

Naturally, this would not be the first time I got on an airplane. That I was studying in Hawaii, though born and raised in Hong Kong, indicated I had braved that exhilarating, flying monstrosity at least once before. In fact, I have flown so many times that when my friend, in another attempt to get me talking, asked me when I thought they would serve us lunch, I was able to tell her within 45 minutes of take-off, we would get (in that order): headphones, a packet that includes a toothbrush, a pair of socks, and an eye-patch, a drink, a small bag of nuts, and finally a choice of either beef or fish, which actually taste equally bad.

"The scone served with the meal is going to be so hard you can pelt a cat to death with it," I informed her with some glee. I immediately regretted saying so, however, because the thought of that horrible excuse for a scone did nothing to improve my mood. The car had also gone silent at my mention of felicide. I really don't make a terrific conversationist right before a flight.

People describe the likes of me in many ways. Some use inclusive terms such as "nervous fliers" or "white-knucklers;" others simply dub us aviophobes. I find the last label slightly overdramatic. After all, phobia stands for irrational fear, such as a fright of buttons, or terror at the sound Styrofoam egg containers make when they are opened. I consider a fear for flying rational and healthy. When one considers that four engines and several sheets of metal are all that is keeping passengers on a plane from 100-mile-per-hour winds and a 38,000-foot plunge to oblivion, one must conclude that there are many perfectly-logical-but-rightly-concerned fliers like me out there. Correction: when one con-

siders those vital facts, one must, out of necessity and common sense, become a perfectly-logical-but-rightly-concerned flier.

But not so. Every time I board a plane, buckling up as soon as I settle into my seat, I am always amazed to see people milling about, gossiping, reading newspapers, and—the worst insult of all—sleeping. They do not grab their pillows and pray when the plane starts taxiing, and when the flight attendant so nicely asks us to check for the locations of the emergency exits in four languages, I am invariably the only one to sit up and do as she says. The people around me talk on, as if they were not about to be traveling 600 miles per hour in thin air, where, if things go wrong, their only hope of survival is a neon-orange lifejacket and a plastic mask. I often wonder: do these people have no idea what they are getting into when they plan a trip, buy a ticket, and step on an aircraft? Or do they fully comprehend the risks involved, but do it anyway? I can empathize if this is the case, for I, valuing my family and the pursuit of a higher education more than my life, have also taken the risk of flying for the greater good. What baffles me are those who apparently subject themselves to plane flights just for the sake of sleeping in gaudy motels and buying white-elephant souvenirs, which they can get cheaper at home anyway. The possibility this suggests—that human reasoning power is really quite nonexistent, that we are at the top of the food chain simply because of opposable thumbs—depresses me.

Ironically, my parents epitomize these perplexingly fearless beings. My mother works for the church as a human resource manager. The nature of her job requires her to take an average of 10 business trips a year, and before she was placed in charge of the Asia area, these trips often entailed a 14-hour flight to San Francisco and from there another two-hour flight to Salt Lake City. Having never been on a plane, my six-year-old self could not fathom the process that transformed Mom from a warm embrace in the morning to a disembodied voice coming through the phone. I filled the void with images of Mom in a white suit clicking down the airport terminal, like models on TV, in her hand a cup of Starbucks coffee (only she couldn't have coffee, so she would be having hot chocolate instead). Though at times she recounted stories of frustration during her flights, it never altered her image of a composed, relaxed flier in my mind. Neither had my impression been changed much ever since.

The first time I went on a plane, Mom sat next to me. It had taken her and Dad the first nine years of their marriage to amass enough money to bring all three children on a trip, and we were going to Korea. They told us that we would have our own seat, our own fold-

up table, even our own special kid's meal with a miniature plane. Needless to say, my siblings and I eagerly looked forward to the prospect of flying. However, on the day I boarded the plane, I became antsy because the seat was tiny and came with a belt, like a rollercoaster seat. Now at eight years old I had never been on a rollercoaster, but already I harbored an instinctual aversion towards the torturing device. My mother was quite at ease, however, as she sat down and pulled out a magazine from the pocket on the seat in front of her. I followed suit, but pulled out a paper bag instead.

"Mom, what is this for?"

"It's for people who feel sick during the flight." She flipped over a glossy page that was advertising duty-free perfumes. I hastily put the paper bag away, and was more than a little awed that Mom could look so calm on a plane, where they prepared paper bags for people who would be sick later.

"Is flying going to be like riding a rollercoaster?" I asked as the plane started to inch forward.

"Oh, no. No, not at all," she replied, not putting down the magazine. "It's like being on a Ferris wheel. Don't you like Ferris wheels?"

It was a lie. As I soon realized, a plane flight decidedly resembles a rollercoaster ride, and is nothing like the mellow sway Ferris wheels give when they take people closer to the sky.

My father is an even worse—or better, depending on your point of view—flier than my mother. While Mom is a light sleeper and can understand at least my pain at not being able to sleep onboard, Dad can sleep from take-off to landing. This means he is not a good source of distraction, and is not overly sympathetic whenever I apply the Grip of Death on his arm during turbulence. He used to hold my hand or pat my hair when I was young, but in recent years, when the plane started shaking and I started whining, he peered at me blearily and asked, "This thing is safe. What are you afraid of?"

Good question—one that I have been trying to answer for a long time. What am I afraid of? In Chinese a proverb goes, "The longtime patient becomes the doctor eventually." My fear for flying has caused me to collect, perhaps unconsciously, bits and pieces of trivia about aircraft and their safety, making me an expert on the topic. For instance, I know flying is one of the safest ways to travel, and I am under more risk every time I go down the stairs or take the bus. I know that every day about 35,000 commercial planes take off and only a couple run into deadly accidents every year. Airplanes are so incredibly safe because their wings are designed to withstand up to 150% of design load, and they can fly even if one or more of their engines fail. When

accidents do happen, 96% of the people involved have survived. Equipped with such comforting information and a knowledge of the true gospel, I am not scared of death. I also trust that the pilots and crew members onboard are adequately trained and qualified to fly an aircraft, so I am fine with temporarily giving up control over my own safety. Then why does the thought of a plane taking off churn my stomach? Why did I start having panic attacks every night, where I felt suffocated in the dark as the room spun around me and my heart beat almost as loud as the clock, three months before my trip back home?

Truth is, I do not know. Though there must be a rationale behind my fear—which is wholly logical, as demonstrated by the above use of statistics—I struggle to find or to articulate it. In my mind I know nothing is going to happen to me, but in my heart I always feel that something is going to go terribly wrong. Just like in the movie *Snakes on a Plane*: those passengers have not anticipated deadly, slithering reptiles on their seat, but there they are, waiting to strangle and sink their venomous fangs into flesh. Or as in *Superman Returns*, when Lois Lane is being thrown around in a plane that is being dragged by a space shuttle into the Thermosphere.

(Actually, I have not seen *Snakes on a Plane*. I did see *Superman Returns*, which has brought me many nightmares since. These movies should come with a warning.)

Their message is clear. It could happen.

Really, it could. Two years ago my family went to Toronto, and on our way back we had to stop in Detroit. The flight was one of the bumpiest I had ever had, mostly because of a storm in the area. Several days later an Air France A340 with over 300 people onboard overran the runway at the Toronto airport because of bad weather conditions, running into a forest and catching fire. A cold shudder passed through me when I read the news, because I could have so easily been one of those passengers. However evil it might make me seem, I admit the first thought coming into my mind was, "That was close. I'm glad it's not me."

It could happen—the phrase haunts me. Whenever I hear about an airplane accident (it is odd: when people learn that I am afraid of flying, they always have a terrifying story to tell), I do not think of the death toll or what caused the incident. It is the fear that must have permeated the cabin before the crash that morbidly fascinates me. I imagine the sudden change of air pressure, the pull that seems to drag one's heart right out of one's throat, the drop of oxygen masks, the frantic fumbling to strap on a lifejacket, the wail of babies, and, finally, the recognition of this is it. Evidently this is not what usually happens:

most passengers are knocked unconscious before a crash, and do not suffer endless torment before their death. But their fear is what goes through my mind half the time when I am on a plane. The assurance of the safety statistics and my overactive imagination sit on each side of my shoulders, an angel and a devil, constantly running conflicting thoughts through my mind. Flying becomes a tedious business. I am never far from breaking out into sweat during a flight, and just picturing being in that high-strung state of mind for a continual of 10 hours gives me nausea on the ground. Possibly, my fear of fear has turned me into a perfectly-logical-but-rightly-concerned flier.

Furthermore, this fear is often intensified by my fellow passengers, who are, apparently, not only fearless but lawless as well. They ignore the safety video's instruction to not use any electronic devices during take-off or landing, and insist on listening to their MP3s during those times, which might well be playing the last song they'll ever hear. Or, they pick the bumpiest moments during a flight to unfasten their seat belts, stand up, and open their overhead cabins only to get the most banal thing imaginable, like a toothpick. Let me give an example: one time, I needed to fly from a U.S. city to another. Like most domestic flights, the plane I went on was tiny, with a passenger capacity of about 60 people. I dutifully strapped in and grabbed the arm-rests, preparing myself for a quick but not necessarily painless ride (for smaller planes are, statistically, more prone to accidents than bigger carriers). As we were about to take off, the plane quivered and paused; then, a flight attendant came out of the cockpit and walked over to the woman sitting behind me. I couldn't see them in my seat, but I could hear them. And this was their conversation:

Flight attendant: "Miss, have you been smoking?"

Woman: "No."

Flight attendant: "Our smoke detector in the lavatory rang, and you were the only one who used the bathroom."

Woman: "I did not smoke!"

Flight attendant: "Can I please check your handbag?"

At this point, the woman started to swear. Another flight attendant came and announced that the plane was not going anywhere without finding the source of the smoke. The old man sitting next to me turned and started to reproach the woman, who spat "none of your damn business" back to him. A toddler sitting two rows in front of me started to howl. Amidst this chaos, I heard flight attendant one mumbled to flight attendant two that someone "may have to go down and find it."

Find what? More importantly, down where?

These questions I dared not contemplate; the images conjured thereof were too gruesome. Eventually the flight attendants found the cigarette end in the woman's purse, and we were able to take off. Throughout the flight I kept picturing another cigarette flushed down the toilet, putting the plane on the verge of explosion. During moments like these, I could not help but harbor a deep resentment to those who made flying a bigger hell than it already was.

To cope with my crippling fear and other impossibly obnoxious passengers, I have an arsenal of tricks. For example, when I flew back to Asia last Christmas, I brought with me a fully-charged laptop, a fully-charged iPod, five balls of yarn and my knitting needles, and three paperbacks. I excluded my boyfriend from my list of distractions because, flying with him the first time, I didn't know whether he would be a talker or a sleeper. (Turned out he was a sleeper.) I also picked the aisle seat for maximum evacuation capacity, and luck had us sit right next to the wing, the most stable point on the entire aircraft. Before the flight, I had checked the weather report, as well as the online turbulence watch to make sure it was going to be a smooth ride. And when my cup of water shook ominously during the flight, I fixed my eyes on it and imagined that I was actually on the rocky terrain of Jurassic Park. For some reason, dinosaurs do not scare me as much as flying does.

All these preparations do not ensure that I will have a safe ride, or even an enjoyable one. Still, they have enabled me to survive over 30 flights in the past. Once, my father, freshly graduated from a hypnosis class, tried to hypnotize my fear of flying out of me. After 30 minutes, he gave up, declaring that I was "not relaxed enough" and was holding onto my fear. Perhaps I was. I cannot imagine the day when I will be free from this fear. It has become a part of me, and I will just have to deal with it.

Dad ended up giving me a good old blessing instead.

Tree House

Dave Jones



Thy Entrance

Michael Kemp

She said to me that I am her whole heart.
And with great joy I did believe her lips.
And through her frame her blood I pumped in vein.
Happily I pumped until I saw approach
Two stranger cells come seek out their air feed.
I said to them that they by her own heart
Rejected be. They ridiculed my words.
They said they were no strangers to this place,
But in the hidden arteries from me
They lived. One, an unforgotten and still
Longed-for love. One, not a love, but he did
Flatter her by showing her unasked-for love.
These cells, not mine, are given entrance
To her, my heart, I no longer entrance.

Committed

Lillian Asuao

Unlike many of the other girls attending BYU-Hawaii, I'm not hoping for a big, brown Polynesian to find me and marry me. I'm not really thinking about dating, much less marriage. Years of being "one-of-the-boys" has scarred me. I know the typical Polynesian boy all too well—too well to allow one to get too close. As sweet and attractive as Poly boys can be, they can't be trusted. They're heartbreakers, so I make it a point not to allow them anywhere near mine. I get enough heartache from the Polynesian men who dominate my family. And honestly, I'm just scared senseless at the possibility of even more heartache. So I try my best to emanate the vibes of cold indifference: I don't want it, 'cause you don't have it. Go away.

Yeah... the whole vibe thing? It doesn't work.

Apai

Friday night (Spring 2005)

Lavendar, three-quartered sleeve, cotton top. Faded Angels flared jeans.

Interruption of intense DDR battle. Eye contact.

Dang! He needs to fix his face! Whaaat!? Eager!

Scanning: R.M. Fresh off the mission.

Accomplice: Vaguely familiar. Oh...EW. He's from the Samoan Ward.

"Sorry to interrupt. I see you're really busy, you know. We just need change."

"Oi. Sorry, my bad." I jump off DDR and head for the counter to get him change.

"Blah blah blah something something blah." He's saying something but I'm not paying attention. I hand him his change.

He remains... "Can I watch you dance?"

I can feel my face going: *Uh...What? Awkward!* "No..."

He does the whole eye contact thing again.

Man, he's really fresh off the mission.

2 Days Later – Church

Him again. *When did he get here?* "Guys, this is Apa. He just returned from a mission." *Haha! I knew it! Damn, I'm good!*

Lunch at the Aloha Center

Him. Again! EEH.

Accomplice: Little brother...or maybe it's his friend...can't remember. Eager excitement. Desperation almost. *Heh, so typical.* Same questions. B.R.T.¹ *Haha. I can read you!*

I roll my eyes. *I don't have time for this. Why are we sitting here talking with him?*

I look over at Marie. *Oh yeah. That's why.* Marie always falls for these guys.

The Passing of a Few Sundays

I walk into class and there he is at the front of room. *He's teaching?*

It looks like he stole his table from the Relief Society. Covered in lace. Statue of some dude praying.

He reminds me of someone. Apa that is, not the statue. The spiritual passion. The stature. *Interesting. Kind of attractive...like Kavika—almost—minus the whole spiritual passion.*

An observation by Nayse

"That's the thing with girls. They always mistake the Spirit for something else."

By "something else" he meant "love" or "lust" or whatever.

It's highly possible that I *could* be just as stupid as those girls.

Conversation with Sandra and Aljay (Sandra's boyfriend, my cousin)

Sandra: Liiillll...do you like anybody?

Aww, man. She's bored. What a whiner. She just wants to be entertained, which means she's probably just gonna laugh if I tell her.

Me: No.

Sandra: C'mon, Lil! You don't like *anybody*?

Me: Sandra.... *Should I tell her?* Ugh.

Sandra: What?

Me: Huh? Apa. *I like Apa.*

Sandra: C'mon, Lil. Who do you like?

Me: Uuuuummm.....

She gasps.

Sandra: Who is it?!

Me: What!?!?

Sandra: Who's the guy?!

Me: What!?!?

At this moment, Aljay, who'd been happily doing whatever it was he was doing, chooses to be a part of the conversation.

Aljay: What guy? You want me to beat him up?

I shake my head in disbelief. *Why? Why?*

Sandra: No. The guy that Lil likes.

Aljay: AO! Who do you like?

Me: What!?!

Sandra: She's being a jerk and won't tell me who it is.

Me: I don't like anyone!

Sandra: C'mon, Lil. Tell us who it is!

Me: I'm not gonna tell you.

Fifteen minutes later, I tell them.

Aljay: Apa's cool. That guy can dance, man.

Sandra's too busy giggling to say anything. *What a jerk. She always does this to me.*

Aljay: Yay, Lil! You like a guy!

Me: Yeah, whatever. *Now I feel like an idiot.*

Aljay: You want me to beat him up?

Could you? That way I won't have to worry about liking him.

Aljay: Hahaha. Just kidding.

Sandra *finally* takes a break from laughing, and notices how traumatized I look.

Sandra: Lil, it's okay!

Me: Yeah, whatever.

It's not! It's not okay! I don't WANT to like Apa.

Christmas Night 2005

Billabong hoodie. Bongo jeans with a hole on the side—my favorite pair.

Watching *King Kong*.

There's a seat between us.

Dang. I really need to pee. I get up, and whisper "I'll be back."

I return to find him at a different seat. He's now sitting in the seat that was between us. The only seats left are: the seat next to him, the seat behind him, and the seat in front of him. *Crap.* I can't sit behind or in front of him, he'd think I was dissing him. I sit next to him, hugging the arm rest. He shifts in his seat. Shift. Shift. Shift. Somehow his arm ends up on me. His head on my shoulder. *Haha. Sooo slick this guy!* This is his version of the infamous "Yawn and Stretch" routine guys always pull. As lame and as stupid as his moves are, I play along.

Eventually, he reaches over and pulls out the chocolates he has. He turns to me, tilts his head. Eyes wide, eyebrows raised: *Want some?* "They're a little melted," he says. I reach over to grab one. He pulls them back. "I'll feed 'em to you."

There goes my face again: *Are you serious?*

I reach over again, and he blocks me. "Fine," I hear myself saying, "I don't want chocolates."

I face forward. Not even watching the movie.

He leans forward putting a piece of chocolate to my lips. "Bite it."

I gave in. King Kong did whatever it was he did in that movie. We sat there feeding each other chocolates.

Conversation with Sandra

Me: It was so gay! Who does that? Who feeds each other chocolates?

Sandra: Haha! Whatever, Lil. You know you liked it.

Me: Shut up.

New Year's Eve

Parked. In his car.

White winter jacket—fitted. Stressed Iris Jeans.

Watching *Troy* on my laptop. The battery dies.

So...

Apa: What do you want to do now?

Me: Let's read scriptures. Hahaha.

His face: *Are you on crack?*

Apa: Do you have Chapstick?

Me: Yeah.

I hand it over.

Apa: No. You put it on me.

Me: What?

Apa: You put it on me.

He closes his eyes. *Uuuuummm...okay...* I lean over, applying the lip balm on his lips.

Apa: No. You put it on and then put it on me with your lips.

Me: HAHAAHAHAHAHA! You're funny!

Apa: I'm waiting.

Pause.

Me: I've never kissed a guy.

Apa: ARE YOU SERIOUS!?

Me: ...yeah...

Apa: You wanna learn?

Me: ...uh...haha...

I can tell he's getting desperate. And I'm doing everything I can to change the subject.

Me: So in the scriptures...blah blah blah...

He's not even hearing me.

Apa: I need to shave. I got stubble. Wanna feel it?

So I'm feeling his stubbly cheek. Then...

It took me awhile to realize what he was doing. I wasn't even sure if I liked what he was doing. When he finally gave me my mouth back, I just sat there. I didn't even bother to wipe his slobber off my mouth and chin. I'm so confused. *So...am I happy now?* I look over at Apa, smiling to himself. *Well, he's definitely happy.* He looks back at me. His face starts to pinch. I quickly turn forward.

Apa: Are you okay?

Thoughts run through my head a million miles a millisecond.

Me: I don't know...I just feel...weird...

Apa: Aw, man...now I feel weird.

Me: No! Don't feel weird! I don't feel weird!

Too late.

Next Day (Sunday)

He calls.

I'm deep asleep.

The ridiculously loud ring wakes me. Seeing his name on the tiny cell phone screen, I quickly answer.

Me: ...Hello?

Apa: Hey, Lil?

Me: Hey...

Apa: Are you sleeping?

Me: Yeah. I was...

Apa: Oh...I'll let you sleep then. Sorry.

Me: No, no. What's up?

Apa: No. Go sleep.

Me: No I'm awake. (*Liar.*) What's up?

Apa: Um...I just wanted to apologize about last night...I shouldn't have kissed you.

Me: Oh...

Apa: I really wanted to, and I was tempted...but...yeah. I'm sorry I made you feel weird.

He wanted to! Haha. Wow.

Me: Oh, it's okay!

He wanted to! That means he likes me...right? Aw crap.

I don't talk to him for a week. I'm still confused about the whole kissing thing, and his apology has thrown me off even more. I'm too scared to talk to him. I can't think straight. He makes me confused.

We Finally Talk...

Me: So why did you kiss me? Did you do it 'cause you like me, or just

because I was there?

He sighs. I can just picture him rubbing the back of his head. Trying to find the words to explain what happened.

Apa: That's why I felt so bad afterwards...

So he didn't kiss me 'cause he liked me...

Apa: I do like you...

He likes me!

Apa: I mean, you're cool to talk to and everything...

Okay...

Apa: But...I don't think you're ready.

We're just going to be friends...

Apa: I really wanna be friends though.

I'm not ready? I can be ready! Right? Why can't I be ready?

Mauricio*

March 2006

Baggy gray polo shirt. "Lily" embroidered on my right shoulder in black. Another day at work behind the counter. Bored. Irritated.

Guy: Excuse me. My friend wants to know if he can have your number.

I can feel my face. Eyebrows raising and scrunching. *What the heck is WITH this stupid counter? Why can't people just get their change and leave?*

Me: What?

Guy: My friend wants to know if he can have you number?

Aw hell no!

Me: Why doesn't your friend come ovah hea and ask me himself?

Guy: Mumble, mumble, mumble.

Se Keste.

Me: What?

He fidgets a bit.

Guy: I lied. It's actually me. I want your number.

Me: HAHAAHA! Why?

Guy: 'Cause I think you're cute.

He's so full of crap.

Me: What's your name?

Guy: Mauricio.

Me: What?

Guy: MAURICIO.

What kinda name is that?!?

Somehow he gets my number. He calls and leaves a message. 20 minutes later, he calls and leaves a message. 30 minutes later. Call. Message. Another 30 minutes later. Call. Message.

9:00 pm – message: He'll call at 10.

9:30 pm – message: He's going to bed. He'll call tomorrow.

10:15 pm – He fricken calls AGAIN!

Eeh! Why do I always attract fricken crazy people?

Kavika*

Spring/Summer 2006

He returns from the mission. Exactly the same. You'd think he'd have changed a little bit. Man, was he this irritating and immature before? I admit I found him somewhat attractive before his mission. But I was young and stupid. And limited. He was the only guy Dad would let me hang with, that wasn't my cousin.

Wow. He's so irritating. Who talks about themselves for four fricken hours?

Who does that?

Kavika: Blah blah blah marriage...

Wait. What?

Kavika: So everyone thinks I'm gonna get married in two weeks, but I don't want to get married. My cousin is getting married. Blah blah blah married blah blah marriage.

For someone that claims to be against marriage, he sure talks a lot about it.

Kavika: How about you? Are you getting married? Do you want to get married? You should get married. You want to get married don't you?

Me: Like hell I do!

At Work

He calls. Why? Beats me. It's just "blah blah blah."

Obmygosh. He's talking about marriage AGAIN.

Me: Yeah...okay...so I really need to get back to work.

Because there's absolutely no one in the Game Center that needs change.

Kavika: Blah blah blah marriage.

Me: Yeah...okay...I really need to go okay BYE.

Kavika: Oh. Okay. I love you, Lili. Bye.

What?

I quickly shut my cell phone and throw it to the ground. *Stupid JERK! Don't ever!*

Conversation with Sandra

Me: He said "I love you." Ew. So irritating.

Sandra: Hahahaha. I knew it.

Me: Maybe it was just one of those automatic things, you know?

Sandra: Yeah right. Hahaha.

Me: Shut up.

At Work

He calls again. He talks for a million years as usual.
Ten minutes later he finally realizes I haven't said a word yet.

Kavika: Are you okay?

Me: Hhmm.

Kavika: So what's new?

Me: Mmmm.

Kavika: Hahaha. You're tired, huh. What were you doing last night?

Me: I was with my boyfriend.

What the heck am I saying?!

Kavika:what? You have a boyfriend?

Me: Yeah.

NO!

Kavika: Oh....mumble mumble...gotta go bye.

Conversation with Megan

Megan: You told him you have a boyfriend?!

Me: Hee hee. Yeah! And he hasn't called me since.

Megan: Aw...poor Kavika.

Me: Whatever.

Megan: Lil, I think you're afraid of commitment.

Me: DUH! I'm fricken terrified of commitment. I don't want it!

Saka*

Nov. 30, 2006 – Texting with Saka about movie plans

6:58 pm – SAKA: is it just u n me dats goin

7:01 pm – Me: Logo and sese might be comin

7:03 pm – SAKA: Nah I'm alright thankz

7:03 pm – Me: Wait so you're not going now?

7:05 pm – SAKA: Uumm kind of

7:07 pm – Me: Huh? Do you not want them to come?

7:08 pm – SAKA: O huh uumm I dont no

7:10 pm – SAKA: im sorry

7:11 pm – Me: are you okay?

7:12 pm – SAKA: Uumm I dont no

7:13 pm – SAKA: Do u want 2 go

7:14 pm – Me: Yeah, but did you just want it to be the two of us?

7:15 pm – SAKA: Uummm is dat bad

7:17 pm – Me: Oh! I'm so sorry. I just thought...yeah that sounds cool

7:19 pm – Me: So...this might sound really stupid but is it like a date?

7:21 pm – SAKA: Up 2 u do u want it 2

7:23 pm – Me: I don't know depends if that's what you meant

7:24 pm – SAKA: Yeah up 2 u

7:26 pm – Me: Either way I'll still go to the movies with you

7:27 pm – SAKA: Sweet buddy

7:29 pm – Me: You're really confusing me man

Why can't guys just be straight with you? So irritating.

Our "Date" or Whatever-U-Want-It-2-Be

SAKA: So what's your favorite music? What's your favorite dessert?

If you could eat something right now, what would it be? You like alternative music? What bands do you like?

Wow. He asks a lot of questions.

Me: Yeah, I'm really tired. So if I start talking stupid, it's because I'm tired.

SAKA: Heh heh. Okay...blah blah blah but mumble whole...

Me: Hahahahaha!

SAKA: What?

Me: You said butt-hole! Haha.

SAKA: Okay so this is what I know about you: You like rock. You LOVE chocolate. You have a lot of guy-friends. And you get hyper when you're tired.

Is he trying to define me? Awkward!

Solomoni*

Conversation with my cousin, Logo (whom I affectionately call Uncle)

Uncle: Auntie! There's something I need to tell you.

Me: What?

He smiles.

Uncle: There's a guy that likes you.

Me: Eh. I don't care.

Uncle: No, Auntie. He's really cool.

Me: Yeah. Whatever, Uncle.

Uncle: No, Auntie. I'm serious. You wanna know who it is?

Me: No.

Uncle: C'mon Auntie!

Me: Hahaha! Uncle, I don't care.

Uncle: I know you wanna know!

Me: No I don't.

Uncle: Why not?

Me: 'Cause I'm just gonna get irritated.

Uncle: No. You won't when you find out who it is.

Me: I don't care. I don't want it. See! I'm getting irritated right now!

Uncle: So you wanna know?

Me: NO!

Uncle: I know you do!

Me: I know you WANT to tell me. But I really don't care.

Uncle: Okay can I tell you?

Me: Do whatever you want.

Uncle: Okay guess who it is.

This is so stupid.

Uncle: Ohmygosh, I can't believe you can't get it...It's Moni.

He looks at me, waiting for a reaction.

Me: What?

Uncle: Well?

Me: That's nice.

Uncle shakes his head. Disappointed.

Me: What?! I don't care! He obviously hasn't done anything about it. And probably won't do anything about it. And I don't want to do anything about it. What do you expect?

Uncle: Well, he wanted to ask you to the movies on Monday.

Me: Who cares? He didn't. So...what?

Combined Musical Forum (January 21, 2007)

Message from Uncle: Auntie, lets go to the Combined Forum. Meet me at the corner.

I don't wanna go to the stupid forum. I wanna eat!

I call him, hoping he won't make me feel bad. It's kind of messed up to want to eat rather than hang out with your cousin at a fireside.

Me: Uncle, I don't WANT to go.

Uncle: Please! We go. Then we get you ice cream.

An hour later, I'm walking to meet Uncle Logo.

Why is he here? Fricken Uncle.

Me: HI UNCLE!...hey moni.

Awkward!

Moni: Something something something—HAHAHAHA!

Since when does he talk this much?

At the forum, I get stuck sitting between Moni and Uncle Logo.

He's trying too hard. Talking too much. Trying too hard to be funny.

This forum sucks. I start playing Tetris.

Moni nudges me. "Hey," he says. "Stop texting. Hee hee."

Oh no he didn't. You don't knooooow me!

That's the thing with guys—well, at least Polynesian guys. They seem to be really into defining women, labeling them. And I'm absolutely terrified of having a definition slapped upon me, placing limits on what I can and cannot be. They see me as the Quiet Girl, or the Crazy Girl, or the Smart Girl, or the Girl-with-the-big-mouth. They take whichever girl they usually see and use her to define all of me. The Girl that constantly has to be talking to her friends would of course be the girl text messaging during a fireside. That girl could

never be the Girl that constantly needs to be entertained who, at this moment, is totally bored out of her mind and is playing Tetris so that she may find the relief she so desperately needs.

So irritating. Why do guys always think they've got me figured out? Frick, they don't know me!

I guess I COULD give them the chance to get to know the rest of me...but why should I? They can barely handle asking me out on an actual date. They either have to get my cousin to ask me out for them, or call it something other than date (when it really is a date because they make sure no one else is there with us). If they can't handle the simple task of asking for a date, how will they ever handle the multiple personalities that make up Me?

"All tragedies are finished by a death, all comedies by a marriage." – Lord Byron

Personal Revelation

Sandra: There's a drought.

Me: Okay!

Sandra: There aren't any guys worth dating here.

Megan: Lil, we're going tah have to find you a boyfriend.

Me: Ew! Haven't you heard about the drought?!

Hoku: Lillian, how are you gonna find your eternal companion if you don't get out?

Me: Hoku, there's a drought. Why would I go looking for an eternal companion in a

buncha dry, ashy boys?

Hoku: Where are you going to look then?

Me: Utah! Duh.

¹ Building Relationships of Trust – missionary tactic.

* Names have been changed to protect the reputations and egos of the Poly Boys.

Pink Water Lily

Melody Griffith



Ham's Assurance

Shem Greenwood

Ham Meder-Stevenson was 25 years old. He was not married.

This wouldn't seem like a problem for a person his age, but his only ambition in life had been to marry his high-school sweetheart and settle down to have children. He never had the chance to discuss this dream with his high-school sweetheart, because he never met her. Instead, he waded through a shallow pool of first dates and watered-down rejections. Most of the girls had been kind in turning him away. He never got to know them well enough to make them angry.

Don't feel so bad, Ham, he told himself. You're still young. Your father didn't get married till he was 28, and look how he turned out.

Ham's father hadn't turned out well at all. He was the first and only child created by the Meder-Stevenson union. His mother was a traditional woman, and normally would have surrendered her name without firing a shot. But the pregnancy and the year of marriage containing it had been so difficult that she felt cheated not to get first billing in this production that had caused her so much suffering. She muscled her maiden name, Meder, onto the birth certificate, attaching it to her husband's name with an indignant hyphen. Her friends applauded Ham's mother and her hyphen for being so liberal and assertive.

Ham's first name had been another notable battle of linguistics. The decision about his first name went to his ailing Polish godmother, a woman of matriarchal flatulence and sway. The fumes of her dignity permeated every branch of the Stevenson family tree, having once nursed Ham's grandfather and his whole family back from an epidemic. (The nature of the disease changed each time the story was told. Once it was smallpox, but today it was diphtheria, or an African flu). Because of this ambiguous but undeniable heroism, because she was near death and because she insisted on it, she named all of the children of that generation. Good Bible names were the only acceptable choice in his godmother's wrinkled, mirthless eyes, and she had already endowed five children with their earthly label: Nathanael, Malachi, two Naomis and a Jonathan. She was working her way backwards through the Bible when Ham opened the matrix. Unfortunately she was not fluent in English, and did not understand the weight of the name. It was a heavy name for Ham to bear, and smelt primarily like breakfast in a cheap 24-hour diner.

I don't know if his name was an obstacle to him meeting girls. He didn't have a lot going for him even without it.

Still, he was optimistic. After a year of community college he transferred to an unassuming state university and made a new life for himself. He cut his hair. He bought new clothes. He invented a story that his name was, in fact, a nickname, given him as a boy because he always ate ham sandwiches for lunch. He ate ham sandwiches to lend credibility to his story. For a while he tried going by his middle name, which was Michael, but he couldn't get used to it. So many Michaels turned around when someone called that name, and he forgot that he was supposed to be one, too. In the end either name didn't matter. He didn't make many friends, and those he did never asked about his name. It was also about this time that he bought a cat. He never told me its name. He started reading Kafka and Kerouac, trying to be heady and intellectual. He snuck into student film festivals, and got kicked out when he laughed at the wrong time. He thought the film was a comedy, but it was supposed to be mockingly tragic. He never caught on, even after he was asked to leave.

Two years into college, almost a junior with the credits he brought from community college, and still no success with the girls. Once or twice he came close, stealing a kiss when the moon was bright and the girl was not. But it never lasted long. There grew a cold and shivering thing, like jelly, in the bottom of his heart. It spread around inside his chest, canceling out the faith he once had in himself. Each time he was dumped he took longer to recover.

A drop of rain. Two and then twenty and soon everything is wet.

Ham went out less and less, stayed in his room, stayed in the library when his roommates were home. In his mind he wove a spider's web, a tangled mess that connected this regret to that unrelated mistake, and sadness collected like dew on the strands. He forgot if he used to laugh often, and when he did his own laughter sounded strange to him. Every day he imagined large, hot bullets coming from nowhere and blasting through his chest, and he welcomed the fantasy, because it felt like it would let the air out of all the emptiness that bloated there.

Sometimes he tortured himself, riding the bus that ran along the beach. Through the smudged double-paned window he saw slender young girls in bikinis cruising the roadside on bicycles or walking with ice-cream cones and boogie boards. The skin on their bare backs was so flawlessly brown, so smooth, interrupted only by an inconsequential cord of sherbet-colored nylon. Ham wondered if he would ever touch

anything so soft. His hormones foamed and sputtered and the bubbles carbonated the loneliness that was drowning him.

He pulled through the days like an exhausted swimmer, floating on his back for weeks at a time, doing the minimal amount of work, eating too much, prowling social gatherings trying to muster courage to ask a girl for her number, then throwing it away because she was too ugly to be worth the effort. The pretty ones he never bothered with: he wouldn't have a chance.

Ham Meder-Stevenson was 28 years old. He was not married.

College was over. In the springtime Ham electrocuted himself while trying to fix a toaster. The shock startled him. He jumped backwards and fell on the kitchen floor. At first he was relieved to find he was still alive. Then he started to cry. He was miserable that he could have died so easily and had missed the chance. He lay on the kitchen floor and cried for an hour and a half, and his cat didn't even wake up. The tears were bitter. The floor needed cleaning. When he got up, he tried to shock himself again, but the circuit had burned up and he threw the toaster at the wall.

He blamed his name for his misfortunes. He blamed his parents, whose loveless marriage had left him no diagram to follow. He blamed television for making him want possessions and a life he could never have. He blamed the cat, who had never really taken an interest in his problems.

Ham was often afraid of himself. With the exception of the toaster incident, he was afraid of committing suicide because someone had told him that when you kill yourself your soul is alone forever. If that was true, it was terrifying, because there was no one Ham was more uncomfortable with than himself. His own reflection scared him. He always remembered looking differently from the reflection he saw. The face in the glass reminded him of a dog that had been hit too many times, the kind of mongrel you see sniffing on the side of the road with its head down, afraid to even wag its tail. His bathroom mirror was cracked, and one afternoon in the winter he took out a crescent wrench and gingerly tapped the middle of the crack, multiplying it seventy-fold and spreading it over the face of the glass. Now he shaved and checked his hair in the largest remaining mirror fragment, never having to see his whole face at once, and it was better.

Ham wrote letters on paper airplanes to nobody and flew them out of the window. They never came back.

Ham's cat died and he wept. He tried to get another one, but it was hostile and smelled badly and he did not chase after it when it ran

out the open door and never returned. He now lived in an apartment in the city, and had nowhere to bury the deceased cat. He wanted to have a funeral, maybe get drunk in memory of his disinterested but constant animal companion. But work was piling up and he didn't have time to deal with the problem. Ham put the dead cat in a shoebox and taped it up with packaging tape. He ate four corn dogs to make room in the freezer. Ham's cat rested in peace in the freezer for eight months. The shoebox gathered frost around it, a beautiful, wintry monument to mortality and procrastination.

When Ham turned 29 he went home for the weekend. His parents still lived together. They were comfortable with their individual lives and seldom bothered one another.

Here in his childhood home, nostalgia fell from the ceiling like leaked water, and set him looking through old scrapbooks and photo albums. Most were incomplete, with photo booth envelopes full of unorganized prints stuffed hurriedly between the thick, pre-glued pages of the books. His parents were the sort of people to exhaust a roll of film, wait anxiously for it to develop, send all the best pictures to friends and cousins and forget about the rest. Now, rummaging through these unwanted memories he found each image was off-center, out of focus, or had a finger obstructing the lens. The best parts were all missing. It reminded him very much of his own life.

As he explored these fish-bone leavings of the past, he realized that he had never seen a picture of his parents' wedding. The honeymoon and bridal shower were well documented. Even his father's bachelor party had produced a few contraband snapshots. But the wedding almost seemed to have never happened. Digging deeper through closets and cupboards, an anxious groundhog pulling at the roots of hidden reminiscence, he found the evidence he was looking for—an inexpensive Polaroid, stuck in the frame of a mirror that had been moved long ago into the storage shed. In the picture Ham's mother was lovely, thinner, radiant in her white wedding gown. His father wore a tuxedo. The pants seemed darker around the crotch.

When he asked about this his father shouted at him to mind his business and quit snooping around. Ham backed defensively out of the room. He asked his mother about it the next day, when his father had gone to the video store. Ham learned that his father had gotten so nervous at the wedding that he had wet himself. They paid the photographer extra to take pictures only from the torso up, but a relative had brought a Polaroid camera and immortalized his father's urinary disgrace. This was the last time Ham ever went home.

The next summer Ham boarded a bus to the country with an igloo cooler. Inside was a frozen dead cat and an impressive quantity of beer. Ham never ate ham sandwiches anymore. He preferred burritos. He found a nondescript rest stop along the highway and got off the bus. He pulled out the collapsible army shovel he'd brought with him. Looking around, he made sure he was alone and began to dig.

The rest stop was not very interesting. There was a low brick building set in the center of it, which had a men's restroom on one end and a women's restroom on the other. There were also two shelters with metal picnic tables beneath them, their roofs supported by pillars, looking like giant dead moths on upright supports. They also resembled drawings you might see in Sunday school of Noah's ark, a funny looking house with a boat for a basement, only in the case of these picnic areas the boat must have been sunk, because only the house was visible. A sidewalk connected the tables to the bathrooms and the bathrooms to the parking lot.

When he finished burying his cat, Ham realized he had no way to mark the grave. This made him sad, and he resolved to do something about it. In his backpack he found a large permanent marker. On the outside bathroom wall closest to the grave he wrote:

R.I.P.
HAM'S CAT.

There, on the wall, in sinister black ink, he saw his name. It had never looked so bold, so dangerous. The act of vandalism thrilled him. Though the wall had previously been defaced by others, his name seemed to dominate them all. The black letters were so vivid and buoyant, like burning oil on the surface of a beige sea. He drank three beers and walked a stubborn mile to a nearby town and bought some spray paint.

As Ham walked, his insides boiled. A power within him thundered and stretched powerful reptilian wings. The idea of creative rebellion stirred feeling in Ham which he had subconsciously but profoundly admired all his life. For the first time he felt he understood modern art, and all its bitter pathos. Storming into town his head spun with black and white images from edgy independent films he'd fallen asleep in at college, movies blushing monochromatically with disinterested schizophrenia and biting irony. Suddenly it was him on the gloomy movie screen, his whole life taking sharp and sudden focus in a high-contrast post-modern ballad of sarcasm and confusion. Now,

leaving the hardware store with four cans of Krylon, he had had enough. He shook the first can like a wolf killing a rabbit in its jaws. The world would feel the wrath of Ham Meder-Stevenson.

When the police finally caught him he had put his name on the bleachers at the high school, on a bus stop bench and on the side of a trash dumpster. But his masterpiece was drying in colossal letters on the wall of the rest stop bathroom, where his rampage had ignited a few hours before. He had gone back up the highway looking for railroad tracks. Ham always remembered boxcars being covered with graffiti, and he wanted to find one and add his own. On the way he remembered his cooler, which was waiting obediently at the rest stop. Soon the beer was gone, and the artist within Ham, irrigated by the influx of cheap alcohol, broke free of the soil of his bored and lonely soul and blossomed. He wrote a poem, a haiku, in brilliant silver letters on the custard colored bricks, covering his first epitaph with creative abandon:

MY CAT HAS SPENT ONE LIFE
HE GAVE ME THE OTHER EIGHT
TO LIVE DANGEROUSLY.

When the spray cans were empty like the beer bottles, he rattled each one thoughtfully, and then passed out over his cat's grave. The cat had finally taken notice and would follow him as a ghost to the police station.

The town was quiet, and the act of senseless vandalism shocked and disgusted its citizens. They gave Ham the most severe fine they could conjure. Ham didn't care. In the jail he met a girl who had stolen a whole block's worth of newspapers. She was impressed by Ham's recklessness and found the ghost of his cat adorable. She didn't even care that the last line of his poem was really six syllables, and it made little difference. (To a fledgling and inebriated bard, "dane-jruss-ly" sounds like a perfectly legitimate pronunciation). On their wedding day, Ham wore a diaper, just in case.

Surfer Girl Block

Kathleen Majdali



Sunday

Michelle Bautista

The sun
Pours
Runs like rain
Consumes my face
At morning's wake
Through my window
Down my pillow
As red resides
In my almost open eyes

I rise

I'm late.

The Ultimate Antic

Jonathan Miles Smith

Florence, Italy - June 2003

It was a sweltering day in the historic city of Florence. I walked down the street, deep in thought. A moped sped by, the wind from a bus brushed my shoulder, and people were yelling in Italian. Normally, this would have been very interesting to me, but this day I didn't even acknowledge the European chaos. A group of 50 people had been organized to visit Europe for a three-week vacation and I was part of it. Our group leader—my high school art history teacher—offered this trip every summer to students, parents, and anyone else who would be willing to pay, to come and see the magnificent art in Europe. My long-awaited senior trip was finally unfolding. Two of my best friends (who didn't take the art history class) had decided to come on the trip as well. They walked beside me and seemed disturbed as well. We had seen beautiful architecture, sculptures, paintings, and had eaten marvelous food but as we walked back to our hotel, we weren't happy. It wasn't the heat that had us bothered. It was a girl—the deceiver.

Her appearance wouldn't strike one as devilish or overly mean. She stood at a humble height of about 5' 6" and I'm sure she weighed less than I did at 140 lbs. She had smooth, dark brown hair and equally dark eyes. She had a dark mole or two on her cheek and neck that matched her dark eyes and hair. In fact, her face was pretty; it was her most striking feature. If you looked closely though, you could see something menacing in those dark eyes—a glow of evil. Although she had a pretty face, I couldn't help but think that she somewhat resembled a rat. Maybe it was because I knew her and what she was capable of.

She couldn't get away with what she had done. She had disrespected and disgraced the ultimate combination of wit: namely, Matt McAllister, Nate Bradshaw, and myself. She had to pay for her blasphemous actions. She had framed another girl upon whom we had already taken revenge (through an alarm set for 3:00 a.m. hidden under her bed sheet right under her pillow). We had been fooled all along as to the true identity of the treacherous villain who played a part in freezing my underpants solid in Rome, and not notifying me until it was impossible to return. Yes, if you would really like to know, I desperately lacked a sufficient supply of underwear for the remaining time I stayed in Europe. I went without undies several times—In fact, the rest of the trip. My friends and I call it “free-balling” and it is of all

burdens most uncomfortable and humiliating. Not only was I humiliated by traveling Europe without underpants, but my friends had also been scammed and embarrassed by this same group of criminals. The ring leader's identity was revealed to us through a simple slip of the tongue by one of her accomplices at dinner and because of how the information was received, we had the element of surprise.

Payback was essential for the sake of our reputations and to slam a message into their traitorous skulls—you don't mess with Miles, Matt, and Nate. Of all people to try to outwit and punish through pranks, we were the wrong group. We had to come up with a plan that would end their hopes of retaliation and make them submit and confess that we had outdone them. Something so absolutely ridiculous that there would be no way for them to counter. An antic to end all antics.

We went up to our room to think. We decided we could devastate them best by taking away that which was most precious to all of us on the trip—sleep. What if we could devise a plan where we could leave them entirely sleepless and then watch their eyes regretfully fall shut as they tried to look at the real statue of David!? Or as they stumbled half-consciously, walking up the stairs to the famous Florentine Cathedral? It would be glorious; it would rob them of precious memories for the rest of their lives! Instead, they would remember only one thing—"Why did we ever challenge the kings?"

We searched and scoured every crevice of our room. We knew their room would be similar to ours, and whatever disaster we could bring about in their room, we could role-play in our own. The most striking feature of our hotel room turned out to be a light switch on the side of the bedstand that could turn on and off the lights for the entire room. But how would we use it? We thought of some type of invention that would involve a string system to turn on and off the lights for the entire night. There were too many variables in that plan. We wanted our idea to be unseen and undetectable. We wanted them to have no idea of what was actually happening. Moreover, the light switch was a button...a string would not work. So what could be done? Then the idea hit us all at once like a revelation from Heaven. If one of us could fit under the bed, then that person could press the button at will all night and leave the villains bedazzled and frustrated! It seemed perfect! There was a problem though...the gap separating the ground and the bottom of the bed was only 4-6 inches tall. Neither Nate nor Matt could fit under the bed—I was by far the thinnest of the three, but I couldn't even squeeze under. As we sat there devastated, another revelation snapped us out of our despair. In no time, Matt and Nate were lifting up the bed, and I was sliding under. They let it

down gently and I realized that if I lay flat and kept my head sideways, I could lie under the bed without being crushed. I reached my hand up and click click...it worked. I turned the lights off in the entire room. I turned them on again. Now I needed a way to escape. It seemed simple enough; I could actually get enough leverage to push the bed up and slide out through the widened gap. But, after some experimentation, we realized that if a person was on top of the bed, I could not escape from under it. All I had was a little leverage with my wrists. This threatened my escape options, but if everything ran as planned, I would have no need to push the bed up while someone was on it.

I could picture the victory scene: breakfast the next morning, the girls with their frizzled hair, bags under their bloodshot eyes, with a look of anger and frustration on their face as I kindly asked them how they had slept the night before. They would have already started telling the story of how the electricity in their room was faulty and they couldn't sleep all night to others at breakfast, and I would join the conversation and listen with pure glee filling my soul as Matt, Nate, and I claimed our silent crown as victors of the war of wits. We would reveal ourselves later, after faking sympathy for a few days to milk the situation, but for that moment we would just bask in the glory of their defeat.

Now, if I may, let me interject for a moment. I knew the sacrifice that this would require. I knew that I, too, would be stumbling and squinting as I tried to admire the beautiful art and history that Florence contained. I knew there was no hope for sleep for myself, and I knew the next day would be brutal for me as well. But I imagined that I would be energized with a type of pure happiness that mortals rarely enjoy. And even if I wasn't—even if I had the worst next day of my life, it would all be worth it. Even if I sleepwalked into oncoming traffic and was hit by a bus, I would die a martyr, seal my blood on the ultimate antic, and die a hero.

It was time...Matt and Nate left for the girls' room, full of happy treachery in their eyes. I spied out my window as the plan was initiated. I felt happiness welling up inside of me. Everything looked in order. My friends walked down the street with the girls and that was my cue. They obviously hadn't noticed that the reason for my friends' invitation to take them out for Italian ice-cream wasn't to flatter them. I snuck over to the girls' room and grabbed the handle and pushed. Impossible! The door was locked! How could this be!? How had my friends been so careless? They were supposed to have left the door open as they drew the villains away from their den. I tried to give them the benefit of the doubt, imagining some freak mistake happening that was entirely not their fault, but I couldn't help but feel betrayed. Yet,

this was no time to abort mission. I would get in there no matter what it took.

I walked down to the receptionist at the desk and explained that I needed a key to a room upstairs. The language barrier probably helped decrease her suspicion, and she sent the janitor upstairs to open the door. I thanked him with a quick "Grazie" and walked in the room. I determined which bed was the ring leader's and lifted up the side and squirmed under with some difficulty. I had only brought with me a miniature sponge bob pillow to rest my head on, if occasion called for it. I tested out their bedside light switch and it worked. Now all I had to do was wait.

Wait I did. An hour passed. An almost unbearable hour. Can you imagine the claustrophobia that this caused me? I had the bed bottom so close to my face that I had to have my head completely sideways to not have cloth smothering my nose and mouth. I had my 4-6 vertical inches of air and that was it. I couldn't move; I could only shuffle and adjust myself. I feared what would happen if an urge came to use the bathroom. What was taking so long? Two hours passed. I don't really know what we were thinking when we decided I should enter the room so early. I guess we were thinking that the girls would want to get to bed early in order to be ready for the big day ahead. Perhaps we were a little overeager to start the antic. I entered the room at about 7:00 p.m. I began to realize they might not go to bed until possibly 10:30 p.m. or later. Three and a half hours under that bed before the antic...my thoughts of one day telling this story to my grandchildren got me through each excruciating minute. Two and a half hours passed. Fears and doubts skipped through my mind like devils. Wait! The door was opening! Salvation!

I recognized the feet and realized it was only the ring leader's roommate, Michelle Richards. We had never really considered the possibility that we would be harassing an innocent civilian, but for the first time I realized that would be the case. For some sick reason, this knowledge made me happier. Michelle walked around the room, went to the bathroom, and then jumped on her bed to read. Then I waited, but now I had to be perfectly silent. A sneeze would destroy everything. If I breathed too loud, the entire mission would be compromised. After she read her book for an excruciating hour or so, she left the room. I was all alone and could once again breathe. But where was she going at such a late hour? No, how could I have forgotten?! The girls often went to each others' rooms and had sleepovers. If this happened, everything would fall into ruins—my destiny, my life, my joy. I prayed to God that they would return and decide not to have a sleep-

over on this night. I pleaded with the Lord to help this happen. I am somewhat ashamed to admit this—I was praying as I was seeking vengeance hiding under a girl's bed. On top of that, it was against the rules of the trip for me to even be inside the girls' room at this hour, let alone sleep in it. If our leader found out, he could send me home on the next plane to the U.S.A.. Nevertheless, I couldn't help but beg the Lord for the girls to come back to the room. Somewhere after midnight they finally returned. I had been under the bed for five hours. But, my trial of faith was about to be rewarded ten fold.

I experienced girl talk. I felt like I was walking on the moon; I was somewhere no man had ever been before. To begin their gossip, the ring leader started telling Michelle about "What a girl" Miles had been that night. The ring leader started explaining how Miles didn't want to go for ice-cream that night because Matt and Nate had told her that "he wasn't in the mood and was being a girl." She went on to thrash me for being a baby and so on and such. Joy filled my entire being. I almost revealed myself in all my terrible glee. I laughed while restricting my vocal chords and let out silent puffs of air. The comments tossed to and fro about why they were annoyed with certain people in our group just about ruined me. This was one of the greatest moments of my entire life. I can't describe the happiness I felt that night listening to girl talk. I'm sure if you had seen me under there, with my necked hooked sideways and my body jerking in silent convulsions, you might think I was having a seizure, but on the contrary it was possibly the closest thing to pure happiness I have ever experienced.

They turned off the lights and eventually went quiet. I was patient. I waited at least twenty minutes before I tried anything. I wanted them to be right in that happy stage where you're not quite asleep but it feels like it, when I went for the lights. I thought that I had found it and instinctively my hand arose and click click. The ring leader cursed the hotel rooms and the faulty electricity in our hotel. I loved every word of it. Then she got out of bed, walked over to the wall, and hit the light switches. My silent convulsions started again. She didn't know about the bedstand light! This meant that she would have to get out of bed every time I flipped on the lights. Oh my delight! She got into bed all worked up and I waited another good fifteen minutes or so and click click. Expressions of annoyance and unbelief fell from their lips, and most especially from the ring leader's. They seemed to blame everything except the real cause of their misery—me. I continued this practice for the next 45 minutes to an hour, convulsing with joy every time I heard a complaint. Eventually my victim discovered that there was a light on the bedstand (the same one I was using)

that was capable of turning off the lights to the room. That spoiled a little bit of my joy, but not much. It became hysterical when about two and a half hours into it, the ring leader became so exhausted that she would just swat at the button switch with a semi-conscious swing of her arm. I almost died with laughter. Eventually the girls both became so exhausted that they completely passed out and couldn't be awakened by the lights. I tried hitting them on and off. Nothing. I tried it rapidly. Nothing. They were too tired to move and they were completely gone. Realizing I could do no more damage without revealing myself, I decided I would try to get a few hours of sleep before my victory scene at breakfast. Sleeping was just about impossible but somewhere around 3:30 a.m. I fell limp and slipped into the unconscious realm.

The next thing I knew I was in a coffin and buried alive. I slammed the lid of the coffin as hard as I could to get it off of me but it was futile. I was underground. I fought and I pounded and I pushed against the lid with all the strength I had in my struggle for freedom.

"EARTHQUAKE. There's an earthquake!" came the ring leader's voice. Suddenly I snapped back to reality and realized I had been slamming the bed around, not a coffin. I immediately ceased my actions. The ring leader looked over at her startled roommate Michelle lying completely still in her bed. Then, a moment of thought, and one word escaped her lips, "Miles". She knew! I saw her arm reach down on the left side of the bed and I tried to squirm away from it the best I could but it was hopeless. She grabbed my side.

All she could say was, "No way. I don't believe it. I do not believe it." I groaned and muttered, "Get off the bed." She got off the bed, and I pushed it up as much as I could and I squirmed out as she stood there in disbelief. We laughed and she questioned, and the realization about the lights and the torture hit her. Both the girls were in shock. I told them I would see them at breakfast and I left the room. I went down and checked the time. It was almost 4:00 a.m. Then I went to my room. I was relieved that we had made an emergency plan in case something in the mission went wrong. My friends would leave the door open and I would come back and sleep in the room if there was a "Mayday." I tried to open my door and it was locked. I couldn't understand my friends; how could they leave me so abandoned? I busted out my Sponge Bob pillow and started my nap out in the hallway.

At six in the morning our trip guide came and stepped over me to go on a morning run. He asked, "What are you doing in the hall?" I had no real response. What could I say? I mumbled something and he eventually gave up and walked off. My friends finally opened the door and I gave them a rebuking coupled with a glorious overview of the

night's failed yet successful mission. They explained themselves, apologized, and then laughed until they had tears in their eyes. By the time we made it down to breakfast, the girls had told pretty much everyone. They had their bloodshot eyes and frizzled hair in exact fulfillment of my previous eye of faith. After our trip guide threatened to send me home, peace was restored, and the crown was won. The guide rebuked me as he tried not to smile, but the rebuke wasn't sincere, and I could feel his pride for me. I remember the ring leader's exact words: "There is nothing we can do to top this. You've won. How can we ever compare?" That is the day the crown was placed upon us—never to be tampered with again— and that is the day I became a hero.

Respect Yo Rootz

Brittney Betzer



The Wind Is A Woman

Martin Palmer

Should I genderize the wind
probably not...
but two days ago he
tore a coconut branch
mother is a woman
and she would have made
a basket
But my wife says, "I'm so cold."
and the wind
is...
only sometimes, I guess
But last night my
wife put some magazines
(how to mother,
how to decorate)
on the porch
she's comfortable in her role
and the magazines are outside
(midway to the dumpster)
and there the wind
flipped through the pages
(on how to mother,
how to nurture)
should I genderize the wind
yes, she likes being a woman.

Dead Moss

Dave Jones



More than I Bargained For

Seini Unga

Hunched over, I trudged into the house aching from the sharp pains shooting from my lower back. A note was plastered on the fridge. It read:

Mike,

Can you pick up a few groceries? I have parent night at the school.

1 doz. Eggs

Milk

2 loaves of bread

Shampoo and Conditioner

Tampons

Love you babe!

Tampons? Was she serious?! Remembering why my back hurt so much, I sighed and hobbled over to the door. I was tired of that lumpy couch.

I made my way to the closest store: Foodland. I might have driven to Hau'ula, but I wanted to get this done fast. I parked my used Toyota Acura with its faded maroon paint. The store was busy sucking in and spitting out its victims. The black metal doors parted as I approached and there before me lay mountains of consumer products ready to be snatched up by customers like myself. I clenched my fist, securing the means to my happiness. Tampons would have to be last. I could bury them under the other items. I headed straight for the back of the store with my rusted green cart. The wheel kept fidgeting and eventually the wheel stopped spinning. Rust, hair, and mop strings were tangled in the wheel. I was too much of in a hurry to exchange it for another.

I approached the Milk section and my jaw dropped. Skim milk, 2%, Fat Free, 1%, Whole, Buttermilk, Soy. My eyes began to cross. There were so many options, but which one do I pick? Why couldn't there just be "milk?" I glance back at my list hoping that Lisa specified which milk she wanted, but she hadn't. In fact, the whole list was generalized. Just my luck, what if I picked the brand that pisses her off because the bottle is not made from recycled plastic. Meadow Gold, Dairyland, or Silk? I stood paralyzed in front of the bottles of chalky-colored liquid and scanned each type hoping that the Holy Ghost

would help me now with this important decision. I know! Eenie, Meenie, mynie, mo! Tag you're it! Dairyland 2% it is! I crossed milk off the list and with my puffed chest, I trotted off like a champ.

Next on the list: Shampoo and Conditioner. I made an about face and took a couple steps to find myself in front of an assortment of shampoos and conditioners. The aisle smelt flowery, too flowery for me. I liked the smell better on Lisa. Cream-colored bottles, dark blue bottles, some clear with the color of the substance showing. Shampoos for dry hair, oily hair, normal, curly, frizzy, half-frizzy/half-curly, tangle-free, nutrient-rich, perm/color treated. My head was ready to burst and that was just the shampoos! I looked over the conditioners and pretty much figured I could match the conditioner with the shampoo by its name or color. I wanted to thank the manufacturers for making shopping for conditioner male-friendly. I decided to get the VO5 Jojoba Shampoo and Conditioner. I think I remember Lisa saying that Jojoba was an organic plant thingy that is good for your hair and skin. Or was that my girlfriend before I met Lisa? Well, I hope it's right. Hair products: check.

Eggs: Organic. Easy. CHECK!

Bread: Roman Honey Oats. Double easy. Check, check.

Okay, I was to the last item: Tampons. I shivered just reading the word. I was about to enter a totally unfamiliar world where my intelligent system of guessing might not prove to be so intelligent. My heart pounded in my ears, drowning out the colicky babies, whiny brats pushing their disheveled mothers to the verge of insanity, and the bel-ligerent couple in the meat section. I strolled over to the designated aisle and realized to my horror; it was filled with women. Of course, why wouldn't it be filled with women, but why NOW of all times? I decided to pretend I was looking for deodorant since it was in the same aisle. Later, I would wander to the feminine products. If I took long enough, the amount of women in the aisle would shrink. Maybe.

I walked past a couple of college girls I've seen on campus before.

"Hey Mike!" one said.

"Hey Sariah!"

"Mike, this is my friend Celia."

"Hi Celia. Nice to meet you."

"So, Sariah, how'd you do on that Accounting test?" I said.

"I think I did well, but I couldn't figure out how to do the last problem, so I left it blank."

"I had a hard time on that one too. We'll just have to see next class. Well, I'll see you later then! It was nice to meet you Celia. See you two in school!"

After talking with two other classmates about upcoming assignments, that took 5 minutes, I ran into bishop's wife.

"Mike! How are you?"

"Hi Sister Ford. How are you today?"

"I'm doing great. I just wanted to thank you for the talks you and Lisa gave in sacrament this past Sunday. The Spirit was so strong. The sister missionary and I were discussing how you and Lisa are such an adorable couple and we can't wait for you two to have little babies. When are you two planning to have them? You know, it's easier to have children when you're young. You'll have more energy now to care for them." This lady knows NO boundaries! I'm sorry but that's crossing the line.

"We know. We'll definitely let you know when something happens."

I tried to mask my sarcasm. The bishop is the coolest guy I know, but his wife can be so nosy.

"You better. You tell Lisa I said hi and I'll see her at enrichment Night tomorrow."

"I will."

I was ready to leave the store when I remembered my mission. I tried to shake off the irritation like a dog shakes water off its body. I was over it. I looked around and just as I had planned, the aisle was deserted. I shuffled over to the tampons and scanned the different sized boxes. I looked from top to bottom, left to right, in hopes that a box would spark my memory. I also prayed hard. I wanted to hurry before a female, or even worse, one of my guy friends sees me buying tampons. I could already hear it. "Mike, are you buying tampons for your wifey? WAH TACK! Somebody's WHOOPED!" I used to make the sound of the whip when teasing the other guys when their girlfriends would boss them around in front of us. Was I really whooped? Nah, she'd buy me a jockstrap or cup if I asked her to. I turned to the products and grabbed a box. Playtex, Gentleglide: Super Absorbent. What does that mean? Hphm. I pulled down another box. Tampax Pearls with plastic applicator: Regular. Super absorbent, absorbent, regular, light, plastic applicators, biodegradable applicators, Kotex, OB, Tampax, Playtex, and Western Family. What the heck did this all mean? These phrases were running through my mind like the little bunnies on crack. My head began to throb in my eyes. I looked left, then the right. Nobody was in sight. I was too embarrassed to ask one of the workers' help, so I began to do my eenie-meenie-mynie-mo mantra when somebody tapped me on the shoulder.

"Lisa! What are you doing here?"

She explained that she got out of her conferences early and figured I was still at the store when the car wasn't in the driveway. She then took the cart and told me she'd finish the rest of the shopping. I sighed with relief and walked out for some fresh air. I was confused to why she came to the store instead of just waiting at home. I wondered if she was switching all the stuff I was picked for the right items. I won't know until she comes out or when we're home. I rested up against the metal railing outside of the store saying hi to almost every other person who passed by. I guess that's what happens when you live in a small community.

Lisa finally came out and I hastily retrieved the groceries from her and escorted her to her car. Her arm slipped through mine like a thread through an eye of a needle and wrapped her fingers around my wrist. I liked when she did that. She must've had a good day with no drama at her conferences. At least she was happy. As I placed the bags into the trunk, I sneaked a peek like an anxious child at Christmas time. I couldn't believe it! There were no tampons. My brows furrowed in confusion and I searched the bags again. There was a smaller box, but before I could see what it was, Lisa reached in and grabbed it, placing it in her purse.

"Lis, do you know how long I've been here? Almost half and hour! First, I couldn't figure out what milk to get. I stood frozen in front of the milk section praying that the Holy Ghost would send me some inspiration! Then I go and get the shampoo and my head wants to explode from all the different options. I then run into bishop's wife and she compliments us on our talks and how the Spirit was strong. But wait, this is the best. She starts to counsel me about how we shouldn't wait too long to have kids because if we wait long, we'll be running after them in our walkers. By the way you have Enrichment Night tomorrow. And finally, your tampons! My eyes wanted to fall out from trying to figure out what everything meant and trying to remember the box you have under the sink and what it looked like. What confused me is that there are NO tampons here."

She claimed that Aunt Mary Flo didn't come to visit as she planned and that she might be late.

"Aunt Mary who? You don't have an Aunt Mary Flo. And plus, what are you late for?"

Lisa pulls out a box that has the letters EPT plastered on the front and then nonchalantly slipped it back into her purse. "I missed my period."

When those four words were said, flashbacks of what I learned in Sex Ed flooded my mind.

Water Color

Perla Antoniak



Peter Perdu

Shem Greenwood

Peter Perdu is short, with long lines on his face.
He is hopelessly Caucasian, and has never been poor
Each morning he opens a paper, but does not read it
The tiny newsprint words become black ants on the page,
Swarming as if their hill had been besieged.
But Peter Perdu is not uninformed
Always he observes the photographs
Of football stars or dusty Kurds
whose corpses bleed all day.

Every Friday Peter Perdu pays for a harlot.
He takes her home, and does not undress her
But asks her instead to hold him as if he were a child
And he weeps all night.
She will lie there, lipless, suspicious, confused
Her high heels catching in the wrinkled bedsheets
Unable to understand it all,
And like the best dreams,
She will be gone when he wakes.
Peter pays in advance.

I'm not much like you, Peter Perdu
But more than I'd like to be.

Peter Perdu is the last of my aimless generation
Of screaming sleepers and empty-handed thieves.
We all lie with our whores and weep with shirts tucked in.
Peter is our king, our foundation, a backwards messiah
For all of us unsaved, sheep lost and not sought after
For those of us upon which the porcelain Christ in the window
Has no compassion
We have Peter Perdu, and we take his name in vain
With our own names
Forever and never
Amen

On Seeing Your Rumpled Collar in Milton Class

Kathy Ward

In Milton class
Your rumpled collar interrupts my notes.
I want to reach up and smooth it out,
Touch your neck
Let my fingers graze your cheek
Then move more urgently through your newly showered hair.

But I am your student, not your wife.

She should have reached across the table
While you read your morning paper,
Pressed the collar into place, teasingly perhaps.

Had she, I would have been saved
From thoughts of forbidden fruit
In Milton class

World View

Debbie Frampton



